EPISODES
FROM
LIVES OF THE GURUS

- PARCHIAN SEWADAS -
ENGLISH TRANSALTION

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STORY OF THE FIRST MAHAL

Episode No.1

GURU NANAK'S GURU

Once during his travels Guru Nanak, the First Mahal, reached the Sumer Parbat (mountain) which was the habitat of nine naths and eighty four sidhas, besides sixjatis (celebrated ascetics). Their chief was Guru Gorakh Nath. Guru Nanak called on them and offered his greetings with due courtesy, and invited them to a meeting. The sidhas reciprocated the salutation in the name of the Adi Purkh, and welcomed him, saying "You have obliged us with your visit. This is indeed kind of you."

Then followed Guru Nanak's discourse with Gorakh Nath. The Guru recited Jap ji, the Sidh Gosht, and several other hymns. Gorakh Nath invited the Guru to become a yogi, wear yogi's dress with earrings, and to adopt a guru, for no one should be without a guru.

"I am not without guru. I have a Guru," replied Guru Nanak.

"Well, then who is your guru?" asked Gorakh Nath.

"My Guru is the Creator Himself."

'What are His attributes?" questioned Gorakh Nath.

In answer to this question Guru Nanak recited the first *sloka* of the *Japu ji*. "True in the beginning (Primal Time), True in all ages; True now and ever will He be True."

After hearing the *sloka* Gorakh said, "Well, then all the living beings that exist, are also true and eternal. Are they not? Attributes of the Creator and of those created by Him should be the same. Could these be different?"

"Listen, Nath *ji*, the created beings take birth, and are subject to death. They are subject to pride and attachment. They suffer pain in pursuit of pleasure. They are subject to lust which leads to trouble. Because of their own weakness they are susceptible to vice, and suffer consequences of their deeds, which make them dance like frivolous monkeys. They know no rest or peace. How can such, beings be called true or eternal? The Creator alone is Eternal. His star always shines. He is Immanent and Indivisible. Subtle and Abstruse, He is the Source of all bliss. Maya is His maid. He is Omnipotent. (He does whatever He Wills). He is in every form (Immanent), and He is also aloof from all forms (Transcendent). Such a Creator is Eternal, and none else," replied Guru Nanak.

"Right, if the created beings are not the Creator, they are His sons, and, therefore, must be like Him. There is no difference: between a father and his son."

"Listen Nath *ji* at you say is correct. The answer is that all beings are certainly His children. But such sons, as become lunatics, are tied to a pillar, and are given food and water at fixed timings. Son of a king is indeed entitled to throne, but because of lunacy he meets this degrading treatment. His claim to to rule holds, only if he is cured by some physician through proper treatment. In the same way, man because of ignorance, remains

in a state comparable to lunacy. It is only when he follows the teachings of the Perfect Master, & adopts the medcine of virtues, that he becomes one with Brahman, shedding all superstition and ignorance. The attributes of the Lord Father become part of his own nature." Thus ended the discussion with the sidhas. (1)

HISTORY OF THE SECOND MAHAL

Episode No.2

THE KEY VIRTUE

Once Bhai Bala Sandhu, a Sikh, came to see Guru Angad Ji. Bala Sandhu and Mardana, the rebec-player, had accompanied Guru Baba, the first *Mahal*, travels to different parts of the world. Both were witness to the events at all places. Thus Bhai Bala was one of the blessed Sikhs. Guru Baba conferred the ‘guruship’ on Guru Angad, and himself merged with the Supreme Soul. Bhai Bala survived him. On hearing that Guru Angad had succeeded Guru Nanak, Bala came to see him. Guru Angad seated him besides himself with due respect and courtesy. After offering his obeisance, Bhai Bala sought the Guru's permission to ask some questions, which the Guru was pleased to grant.

"Great Guru, You are a real hero because you won the approbation of the Great Guru. It is indeed difficult to completely win over a man like him. He could take pain as well as pleasure in the same strain, and was not affected by I calumny or praise, or lured by gold, treating it as no more than a lump of clay. Pleasing such as him is a rare feat. It is by no means easy. You won his favour. I offer my congratulations. God has blessed you with this marvellous achievement. But be kind and explain to us what particular service or act of devotion was rendered by you, which pleased the Guru so much that he transferred his own spirit unto you. I am very anxious to hear this. Pray, tell me in detail," asked Bhai Bala.

"It is only His grace that I invoked. I am incapable of making any effort. And whatever effort might have been made, was also due to His grace," replied Guru Angad.

"O Guru, you utter the truth. This is the cup of the Master's love. He bestows it on whom-so-ever He pleases. This is indeed the correct version. There is, however, always a doer. The initiative and strength to act are granted by the True Guru. Faith is also a gift granted to a Sikh. I want to know the job that led to this great trust. What was the specific act carried out through you for the Guru Baba, which pleased him. Pray, narrate the whole story to me."

"Bhai Balaji, you were the Guru's companion. As such you are not different from him. So I must comply. But the number of times the Guru showered his grace on me, if described in detail, will make a very lengthy account. I only make a brief reference to my faith in him. The rest, you can yourself divine."

Guru Angad then narrated the various acts which had pleased Guru Nanak: "Once I was in his presence. So was Baba Buddha. It was night time. The Guru asked Baba Buddha to go out and see what part of the night had passed, and how much remained. Baba Buddha went outside, and on return said, 'O, True Master, the night has covered two and a half *pahars* (one *pahar* is three hours), leaving one and a half *pahars'*. This was the time for operating the Persian wheel. Then Guru Baba instructed me to go and find out how much of the night was over and how much remained. Obediently, I went out and looked at the night. Returning to his benign presence, I said, 'O, True Lord, whatever part of the night you have allowed, has passed. You are all-knowing.' When I said this, he was pleased with my faith in him."

ANOTHER SAKHI RELATED

In order to satisfy Bhai Bala Sandhu's curiosity to know what was the specific job that was executed by him, that had pleased Guru Baba, Guru Angad narrated a number of stories: "Once, it was midnight time, I was alone with him, and none besides. He said, 'Angad, the day has dawned,' and I repeated, 'Yes, O Lord, the day has dawned.' Then the Guru gave me his clothes to wash which I carried to the pool. There it was mid-day. I washed the clothes, dried them, and brought them back for the Guru to wear. When I returned it was still night. He again asked me if it was day time or night. I replied, 'O my True Lord, night and day are all your creation. When you will, night comes, and when you will, it is day.' This demonstration of my faith again brought his pleasure on me."

ANOTHER SAKHI RELATED

"Once in a village there was a pond filled with black dirty mud. When it rained, filth from the entire village drained into it. Approaching it, the Guru dropped his bowl into it. Both the sons of the Guru were also with him. First, he looked to Sri Chand and said, 'My son, the bowl has fallen in the pond. Please take it out'. Sri Chand *ji* replied, 'My Lord, let us keep going. The bowl can be recovered later at leisure.' Then the Guru looked towards Lakhmi Chand, saying, 'My son, will you take out the bowl that has fallen into the pool?' Lakhmi Chand said, 'Very well, my Lord. We shall get somebody to take it out.' Then Guru Baba looked in my direction. I immediately jumped into the pool unmindful of soiling myself and my clothes, took out the bowl, and handed it to him. Then also the Guru was pleased with me for my faith in him."

ANOTHERSAKHIRELATED

"Once the Guru was camping in the countryside. Even there, many people started gathering around him. One day a group of persons arrived who were all hungry. They prayed for food. The Guru said, 'Dear congregation, this is a jungle with only kikar (Acacia) trees. Let somebody climb and shake the trees for food.' The gathering thought that the Guru was joking, because an *Acacia* tree bears no fruit. After a pahar passed, another Sikh repeated the request, 'O True Lord, the group is hungry. Pray get them something to eat.' Again the same words were uttered, 'Brother, there are the *Acacia* trees, climb and shake them for food.' The Sikhs again thought that the Guru was putting them off. The Guru nodded to me saying, 'Angad, go and shake the *Acacia*, and feed the congregation.' At this command I girded up my loins, climbed up to the top of the tree, and started shaking it. Lo! Sweets like *jalebis* and *patashas*, started falling like rain and piled in heaps. Everybody ate to his heart's content. At that time also it was my faith in the Guru that made him happy."

ANOTHER SAKHI RELATED

"Once the Guru undertook a long fast. He would neither eat nor drink anything. Several years passed. He would not put even a grain in his mouth. Offerings of money were abundant. Cooks amongst the disciples were in- structed to prepare and serve food to the Sikhs for their sustenance. All kinds of food were available which the cooks served to the Sikhs with the permission of the Guru. But the Guru himself would not take anything.

There was always a big gathering of people at meal times. As many as twenty thousand people joined in at meal time. The Guru put on the appearance of a lunatic to frighten the people away. He took three or four hounds with him and went to live with the *sansis* (a tribe of hunters). Anybody approaching the Guru was given blows with sticks, and stones were hurled at him. People left in fright, saying that the Guru had gone mad. All bandoned the Guru. Only I and three other Sikhs stayed. Then the Guru moved into the forest, taking the dogs with him. We followed, keeping out of his sight. There he started singing this hymn:

'By my side, are a hound and two bitches,
That each morning raise terrible howl.
The dagger of falsehood and robbed carrion with me I carry.
Know Lord-Creator, a low-caste nomad am I. (1)
Neither precept to the good life nor good actions have I adopted.
Foul and frightful is my aspect.
Thy Name alone to the whole world brings liberation.,
In that lies my hope; this my prop.
My tongue day and night utters slanders.
Low my caste, house-breaker am I.
Lust and wrath, of the foulest amongst castes, in my self abide.
Lord! thus abide I in low-caste nomad form. (2)
My mind holding lassos; my aspect deceptively gentle.
A robber, robbing the land am I.
Trying to be clever, with sin am I burdened.
Lord! thus abide I in low-caste nomad form. (3)
Ungrateful, I realize not Thy blessing, Lord!
Evil-doer, dishonest - with what face before Thee shall I stand?
Saith Nanak of low actions, after deep contemplation:
Lord! no better than nomad am I in my aspect. (4)'

The Guru Baba was moving about, singing this above shabad in an ecstatic mood. We also kept moving at a distance, keeping him within sight. Then, out of infinite mercy, he called us. We were very happy to get close to him. We were asked, 'Since you are following me, will you do what I tell you?' We replied, 'You are the one to make us obey.' Then he said, 'All right, if you want to obey me, go and eat the corpse lying there.' The body he pointed to, was covered with cloth, but its outline was clearly visible. We said, 'True is your order.' We reached the corpse and asked, 'O, Master, shall we start from the head or the feet?' He ordered us to eat the feet. Removing the cloth I applied my teeth to the feet, which tasted like sugar. And, in fact, it was sugar and not a corpse.

There were several other similar dramatic situations created by the Guru. But due to his grace, I did not waver in my devotion. My faith remained intact. In every situation, I did the Guru's bidding without hesitating. The Guru looked at me with kindness and said, 'O man, you have won the game, I congratulate you.' His words were extremely sweet. He took me in his embrace leading me to spiritual fulfilment.

He then said, 'O man, he who obeys you, shall obey me. He who serves you, serves me. You are me and I am you. He who regards you and me as different, will stay separated from the Guru.' Earlier my name was Lehna. He gave me the new name of 'Angad', consecrating me as a part of his own self. He then made an offering of five paise and a

coconut, made obeisance to me, and seated me on the throne of guruship in his lifetime. Addressing the sangat (congregation) he ordered 'Pay obeisance to him, he is your Guru.'" Hearing this account Bhai Bala became very happy and recited the following verse from gurbani:

'Those who meditate on Naam get liberated, says Nanak. Their faces are radiant with Divine Light; many shall find release through them.'

STORY OF THE THIRD MAHAL

Episode No. 3

ESCHEW RETALIATION

Once when Guru Amar Das was in Goindwal, Sikhs used to bring water for the *langar* in earthen pitchers. Young Turks (alien Muslims from the ruling class) would break the pitchers with mud-pellets shot from catapults. Those Turks were called Sheikhs. Their parents were aware of this activity. But they would not stop them. Rather, they enjoyed the fun.

"O True Master, kids of the Turks, with pellets from their slings, break our pitchers," complained the Sikhs. The Guru instructed them to use *mashaks* (leather bags) to fetch water. The Sikhs started using *mashaks*. But the young Turks would make holes in them with arrows. "O True Master, they make holes in the mashaks also," reported the Sikhs. The Guru advised them' to use brass vessels, and the Sikhs obeyed. But this did not deter the young Turks who started pelting brick-bats, causing dents in the vessels.

In the mean time, a roving band of armed ascetics (*sanyasins*) arrived and camped there. The boys shot a ball which hit one of them in the eye, and caused grave injury. The victim happened to be the leader of the group. All the *sanyasins* came out with arms and attacked the Sheikhs with swords, killing several of them. On the following day, a mule carrying State treasures disap-peared. This mule was recovered from a house belonging to one of the Sheikhs. So the few Sheikhs who had survived the assault of the sanyasins, were taken as prisoners to Delhi. The Sikhs reported this to the Guru, "O True Master, this is the fate the Sheikhs have met." "Brothers, they have received what their actions merited, but we did not retaliate," said the Guru.

In the same connection Guru Baba narrated a sakhi: "A sadhu asked his fellow *sadhu*, 'If you do good to somebody and he returns it with evil, how should he be treated?' 'You should again do good,' was the reply. 'If you again do him good, and he again returns it with evil, then how should we treat him?' 'You should again do him good.' 'Why so?' asked the sadhu. The reply given was 'He will get his reward for evil, while you will get yours for good. If he so firmly slicks to evil, you should stick to good even more firmly. This is the reason.' The fellow agreed."

The Guru elaborated and said, "If one commits aggression, and the other does not retaliate, God will punish the aggressor. This is His justice. There may be some delay in its dispensation. But when He catches him, he will not be spared, and will suffer blow after blow. So, the Sheikhs have been punished by God. We have no hand in this." (3)

STORY OF THE FOURTH MAHAL

Episode No.4

SWEETNESS AND HUMILITY

Once Guru Ram Das ji met Sri Chand *ji*. When they were by themselves Sri Chand ji casually said, flYou have grown your beard so long." "O kind Sir, I have done this to dust your holy feet. This is the only purpose of growing a long beard: There is no other purpose," said Guru Ram Das. "Now I understand. It is through such sweet talk and humility, that you won title to the throne of guruship. lsn't it so?" remarked Sri Chand, greatly pleased. (4)

STORY OF THE SIXTH MAHAL

Episode No.6

THE GURU TEACHES ETIQUETTE

Once a *diwan* of the emperor came to meet Guru Har Gobind. He was a Turk, arrogant because of his position. The Guru was absorbed in some thing, and so did not take notice of him. This indifference enraged the *diwan*. The idea crossed his mind that he should strike the Guru with his sword and sever his head from the body. The Guru who was all-knowing, saw what was gojng on in the diwan's mind. The emperor had commissioned him for a particular expedition, in which he had been defeated and forced to flee. As he thought of using the sword, the Guru looked towards him, and said, "You did not strike when you should have done it. But at a saint's place, where you are supposed to pay obeisance, you want to use your sword. Whence did you buy this advice? Go and return it to whoever sold it to you. This is useless." At this the diwan fell at the Guru's feet and said, "0 Guru, I made a grievous error. Forgive me for the ignoble thought. You are in reality, the True Emperor. Nothing is hidden from you. You are rightly known as the True emperor. There is no exaggeration in this. I crave your forgiveness." Guru ji remarked, "Listen, diwan, when you goto a saint, regard him as the image of the Creator. Do not take him to be a mere human being. If you approach him with wicked thoughts, your sword will clash with his far more powerful one, which will strike you dead, while your sword is in your hand. Such are the powers of the saints. They are not powerless. I forgive you. But do not forget the etiquette to be observed in the presence of masters. The more you respect them, the better it will be for you. The rest is up to you." (6)

STORY OF THE SEVENTH MAHAL

Episode No.7

GOD LOOKS AFTER EVERYBODY

Once a householder Sikh came to see Guru Har Rai ji, and narrated his problem thus: "O True King, I had a son who grew into a promising young man. He is dead now. I had hoped that he would take over the responsibilities of the household, and that I will come and stay in your service to earn salvation at your door. But my hopes have been shattered. What should 1 do in this plight? This is troubling me constantly."

"Tell me how many members are there in your family, and what do you do to make a living?" asked the Guru.

"O True King, there are two younger sons and a daughter, besides their mother. I am the fIfth. With regard to livelihood, whatever I earn, is used to feed us all," replied the Sikh.

"If you are really keen to serve the Guru, start right away. Leave their care to God. He will look after them. You can make your life fruitful," said the Guru.

"O True King, my thinking is immature. I believe that without me they wili perish. You are the Guru. Everything is at your command. Pray, show me something to put faith into me."

"Do an errand for me. We shall talk about faith, when you return. Deliver a message to my Sikh in 'so and so' village."

"Pray, give me the letter," requested the Sikh. The Guru wrote a message, instructing that the messenger should be imprisoned for six months, after which he should be released, and that he should be looked after well. The Sikh carried the letter and delivered it. He was detained as per the Guru's instruction. The Sikh pleaded, "0 brother, 1 have four persons to support. They can eat only if I earn. Without me they will starve. Pray, let me go."

The Sikh replied, "Listen brother, it is you who have brought this letter. The Guru at whose command everything happens, has instructed that the man who brings this message, should be imprisoned. You want to be released. Now you advise whether we should obey you or the Guru who is omnipotent. Consider what is proper for you and what is proper for me, and then speak."

"Who am I? You should obey the all-powerful Guru."

"You have understood the situation correctly. Now be patient. Relax for six months, concentrate on the Guru in mind, after which I shall let you go. It is in your interest to obey the Guru. Carrying out the Guru's instructions is in my interest also." The Sikh acquiesced.

At the other end, the Guru arranged for the sustenance of the Sikh's family in this way. They went without one meal. Their neighbours asked them why they had not cooked their meal. The Sikh's wife replied, "Who earned has abandoned us. God knows what was his consideration. Now our sustenance is in the hands of God. If He gives, we shall cook and eat. Otherwise, we shall bear it quietly." The neighbours thought it was not proper that the family should stay hungry in their midst, and that some arrangements must be made for them. To start with, each one of them brought one tray of flour for the family. There were fifty houses in the neighbourhood. Thus, fifty trays of flour were collected. Then the inhabitants of the locality gave them employment. The two sons started working as attendants, and earning. A lady took pity and gave the little girl and her mother lessons in embroidery. Thus, their sustenance was no longer a problem.

On expiry of six months, the Sikh was released from detention. He immediately went to his family. He had been greatly worried. He was afraid that they would be no more. But when he found them hale and hearty, he was very happy. In fact, he saw that they were better off as compared to earlier times. When his wife told him the truth about the family, it made him all the more happy. He realised that the Guru had arranged all this to put faith into him. He went to see the Guru again, and out of gratefulness, said happily, "O True King, you have taken me out of hell, and brought the reality before my eyes. Otherwise, my entire life would have been wasted worrying about food for the family. Now I have seen that in fact I was a hindrance in their sustenance. When I was away, there was abundance of everything. Now I shall devote my life in the service of the Guru. Because of your mercy I have found bliss."

"Listen, O Sikh, there were ten doors to the sustenance of your family. When were they without sustenance? God provides it even where there is no door. There is life within rocks. Their sustenance reaches there. There are beings deep inside the earth. God feeds them there. Similarly, there are beings in the sky. Their sustenance is arranged there. Listen to this story of how He looks after His creation. There is a mountain of ferrous rocks in the sea where no fanning is possible. People live there also and need food. They are surrounded by a huge ocean, which man-made boats cannot cross. For them, every year God creates ships and inspires such traders, shows routes to them, so that the ships can reach those mountains, barter iron ore day and night in exchange for food they bring from outside. The exchange does not stop. The people feel that they are drawing their sustenance from the iron ore. So, they love their occupation of mining.

Because they are ignorant of the Almighty. They give all credit to their occupation. As God has to provide sustenance to living beings, He creates the illusion that it is their effort which sustains them. Those who know that it is really God who provides sustenance, are attached to Him."

STORY OF THE EIGHTH MAHAL (I)

Episode No.8

MUNDANE PLEASURES ARE NO ATTRACTION

The emperor, who ruled during the time of Guru Har Rai, one day asked his minister, "There was a *pir* of Hindus, whom they call their 'True Emperor', where is he now?"

"Your Majesty, Ram Das has expired. He has now been succeeded by a child of seven years," replied the minister.

"I want to see him. Send some army men to bring him," said the emperor. Among them was a *Khatri* minister who was a disciple of the Guru. He bowed before the emperor, and said, "Your Majesty, You need not send any army. I will bring him." The emperor agreed.

The *diwan* arranged a palanquin for the Guru and chariots for the disciples, and approached the Guru at Anandpur. He conveyed the entire dialogue with the emperor to the Guru. "All right, we will go to Delhi," said the Guru. Guru ji and his mother travelled in the palanquin, while other attendants used the chariots for the journey to Delhi. The Guru stayed as guest of the *diwan*. The *diwan's* wife had cherished a desire that the Guru should sit in her lap of his own accord. She had resolved that she would accept him as Guru only if he fulfilled this desire of hers. In that case she would serve him with utmost devotion and willingly sacrifice everything for him. She had kept this desire a secret, and had not shared it with anybody. The all-knowing Guru divined her desire, and as soon as he got out of the palanquin, he walked straight up to the diwan's wife and sat in her lap. Overwhelmed, the lady accepted him as Guru with full devotion. In humility she washed his feet and took *charan-amrit* and made an offering of a lot of money. Throughout the period the party stayed there, she entertained everybody with all kinds of food and sweets.

The Guru contracted small pox. He decided to leave his body and uttered this sentence: "I shall neither see nor be seen by the Turk."

"O True Emperor, you are the Guru and the Master of destiny. Your body is still in infancy. You have not yet seen the good things of the world. Pray, keep this mortal frame alive to see the colourful drama of the world. Guru Har Rai had given you the leadership of the sangat, so please continue to look after us," prayed the congregation.

"Dear Sangat, I am going to the abode of supreme bliss and eternal festivities. The drama of this world is nothing in comparison to that. Bring five paise and a coconut, so that the Sikhs may again be given new stewardship," said the Guru. At this command, the Sikhs brought the traditional five paise and a coconut, which the Guru placed in front of him, bowed his head, and said, "Baba is at Bakala." Seeking clarification, the sangat requested that the name of the new Guru be told. The reply was that the Guru would not remain concealed.

The congregation wanted to continue the dialogue, but the Guru silently looked at them, which indicated that the Guru did not approve of further conversation. So the sangat became silent.

"O True Emperor, the king had desired to hear Guru Nanak's verses, during the proposed meeting with the Guru. So pray, be kind and say something which I may pass on to him," said the diwan. The Guru agreed and directed that the following hymn of Guru Nanak be recited to him:

> 'What good consuming delicacies, wearing fine dresses,
> When God in the self is not lodged?
> What good consuming fruit, butter, sugar and sweets,
> Dishes prepared from flour, flesh?
> What good fine dresses, cosy beds,
> voluptuous pleasures?
> What good armies, hordes of servants and
> Residing in palaces?
> Saith Nanak: Without absorption in the Name
> All such objects perdition bring.'

After reciting this, the Guru reclined in Mata ji's lap, and his spirit merged with the supreme Spirit.

STORIES OF THE NINTH MAHAL (I)

Episode No.9

GURUSHIP IS RESPONSIBILITY

When the Eighth Mahal uttered "Baba is at Bakala", several Sodhis set up their manjis at Bakala. They numbered sixteen, each claiming to be the Guru. Guru Tegh Bahadur who was also there, however, kept a low profle. Few people knew him. Devoted Sikhs were not convinced with the credentials of the claimants. So early one morning, they recited *Japu ji*, offered a supplication before the Lord, and approached the Granth. They sought direction regarding the name of the Guru from the Granth. The Granth indicated the word Tegh. The sangat then came to Mata Nanaki and reported that in response to their supplication, the Granth had given the name of the new Guru as Tegh Bahadur. "Is there any Sodhi in your family with that name?" "He is my son, but he leads a very detached life. He stays usually in a dark room. Sometimes he eats, and many times he does not. He cares little for his dress or appearance. He avoids all company as well as conversation," replied *Mata* Nanaki.

"O Mother, from your description we are convinced that he is the real Guru who is above everything, who is the embodiment of contentment, and who is not bothered by affairs of the world. Besides, he is always in meditation. These are all indications of the Guru," said the sangat. Then the entire congregation went to Guru ji. The Guru was in a dark room, absorbed in meditation. There the sangat found him and prayed, "O True King, because you hide, darkness has engulfed all. Pray, appear in the open to dispel the darkness."

"My son, Guru Har Krishan has entrusted you with the leadership of the sangat. So please occupy the manji and bless the sangat," said Mata Nanaki.

"O Mother, the responsibility is extremely heavy, not easy to discharge."

"O True King, you are the all-powerful Guru, pray do not put us off. The Eighth *Mahal* has conferred guruship on you. The Guru Granth has appointed you Guru. Why do you now talk of hiding? The moon of the second day might hide, but how can the full moon hide itself? The Guru has called you Guru, and the Guru has discovered you from hiding. We were incapable of discovering you. Now have mercy on the sangat. Occupy the manji, and save our minds from wavering. The Guru alone can be recognised as Guru. Nobody else can be recognised as such," implored the sangat. Then, in his mercy, he acceded to the request of the sangat, came out of the room, had a bath, changed his clothes, and sat on the manji, the seat of guruship. Happiness ran through the sangat.

There was a Lobana Sikh named Makhan Shah. He was carrying a sum of one thousand rupees around his waist, for the Guru. He had decided that he would only accept him as Guru who would demand this amount, and that he would give the money only to him. He went round offering two rupees to each of the occupants of various manjis. Then, likewise, he made an offering of two rupees only to Guru Tegh Bahadur also, and bowed his head before him. The Guru looked at him, and said, "O Makhan Shah, you owe me one thousand rupees, and you offer only two." At this Makhan Shah was overjoyed and placed the sum of one thousand rupees before the Guru and bowed again in obeisance. Then he climbed the roof and announced that the Guru, the Master of Destiny had been

discovered, that Guru Tegh Bahadur had been discovered; and that there was no other Guru. At this announcement of Makhan Shah, all bogus claimants to guruship fled. Just as stars disappear when the sun rises, similarly, all the manjis disappeared, when Guru Tegh Bahadur appeared. (9)

STORIES OF THE NINTH MAHAL (II)

Episode No. 10

HIGHER CONCERNS OF THE GURU

Once *Mata ji* and some advisors prayed to the Guru, "O True King, the *masands* (order of preachers created by the Third Guru) collect hundreds of thousands of *rupees* from thy devotees and mis-appropriate the money themselves. They do not deposit it in the Guru's treasury. Pray warn them to deposit the money into the Guru's treasury."

"Even so the Guru is not starving. He still eats. Never mind," replied the Guru. At this everybody became quiet, including *Mata ji* and the advisors. Some time passed, then Mata ji and the advisors again prayed, "O True King, imposters have gained strength. They should be administered a warning."

"We cannot issue any warning to anybody. Our mind is occupied with some other concerns. Guru Gobind Singh will deal with them all. He himself will dwell in the region of virtue, and will put the whole world on the right path. He is such a person and has been sent by God. We will not issue any warnings," said the Guru. (10)

STORIES OF THE NINTH MAHAL (III)

Episode No. 11

GURU CONTEMPLATES FUTURE PLANS

Though Guru Tegh Bahadur accepted the throne of guruship, at heart he remained unattached. He was pleased by nothing but the love of God. No material objects of the world gave him any pleasure. His heart was above attachment. Occasionally, he would remark to some confidant, "The burden is heavy, not easy to carry." One day, he secretly went to the nearby wilderness during night time, unknown to his family or the sangat. There he saw a heap of sugarcane strippings. He covered himself with the strippings and went into meditation for five days and five nights. On the sixth day, bullocks feeding on the strippings got startled to see a part of the Guru's body. Thereupon, the Jat Sikhs came running to see what was inside. On search of the heap they discovered the Guru inside. The Sikhs bowed their heads before him. They informed Mata ji that the Guru had been found. Earlier the Sikhs had been looking for the Guru on horses everywhere in the country and beyond, without finding a trace of him, and they had been wailing. The news made the sangat and Mata ji very happy. Mata ji brought a palanquin for the Guru. The entire Sikh sangat and other people collected near the heap. Grief gave place to happiness at the sight of the Guru. People were congratulating Mata ji and the Guru was brought home in the palanquin. Music bands played for several days and a huge feast was arranged in which the Sikh sangat and Brahmins ate to their hearts' content. Then Mata ji asked the Guru in seclusion, why he had inflicted hardship on his body through such austerities. "It is good luck that your life has been spared. God has saved you. There have been Gurus in our family before you also. They never resorted to such practices. Why do you do this?" "The burden is heavy, not easy to carry," replied the Guru. (11)

STORIES OF THE NINTH MAHAL (IV)

Episode No. 12

GURU'S MARTYRDOM

Once, on pretext of hunting, Guru Baba left Anandpur and reached as far as Agra, very far in the country and beyond. There were three other Sikhs with him, all four were riding horses. On reaching Agra they camped in a garden, where a Hindu shepherd was tending his goats. Guru Baba called him and said, "Take mymohar (gold coin) and shawl to the sweets-seller, and against this buy two rupees worth of sweets and bring it in the shawl. My Sikhs will look after your goats." Then the shepherd went to the sweets-seller with the moharand the shawl and conveyed what the Guru had said. A state employee of the area lived in his neighbourhood. The Judicial Inspector Naurang Shah Badshah happened to be camping there. The sweets-seller suspected that this man might be a thief, because themohar and shawl did not go with his status. He considered it prudent to inform the darogha to avoid any future trouble. So, the sweets-seller took the shepherd to the darogha for interrogation. The darogha a~ked, "What do you say?" The shepherd replied, "Four noble horsemen have arrived in the garden where I was tending my goats. They called me and asked me to take this mohar and shawl to buy sweets worth two ropees against the mohar, and bring it in the shawl. They have sent me here. They promised to look after my goats in my absence." The darogha decided to report the hQrsemen to the Emperor. Every night he used to report whatever activities he saw during the day. He wanted to know who they were. So he instructed the shepherd to take the sweets from the shopkeeper and also to take his men with him. He also directed that the four horsemen should come and talk to him, so that he could find out who they were. Thus, the shepherd left with the sweets, the message and the darogha's men. The message was delivered to the Guru. On hearing it he got up to accompany the men. The Sikhs followed, duly armed, on horseback. They reported to the darogha. "Who are you?" asked the darogha. "I am Tegh Bahadur," replied the Guru. The darogha immediately reported to the emperor, "Your Majesty, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the pir of the Hindus, whom the Hindus call the True Emperor, is now in our hands. There are three other horsemen with him. They have all been detained at the shop. I solicit further instructions." The emperor was very happy to hear this, and immediately ordered their arrest. The darogha put all four in jail, putting chains round their necks and waists. Their feet and hands were also chained. Two of the Sikhs grumbled, complain ing that the Guru had landed them in a difficult situation which would'lead nowhere.

"Even now, anyone who wants to go, can be released," said the Guru.

"Kind Master, who will release us now? All our limbs are locked in chains. The Imperial squads are constantly watching us. How is release possible?" asked the Sikhs.

"You are released!" said the Guru. Instantly, their chains got unfastened, and the Sikhs could leave. Nobody was able to see them. Then the Guru looked towards the third Sikh and asked him to go also. But the Sikh had full faith in the Guru, and said, "O True King, my head has already been surrendered to you. It is for you to keep or kill me. I have no life beyond you." The Guru blessed him and permitted him to stay with him to sacrifice his head for the cause of the Guru. The Guru stayed in the prison along with the Sikh. The ministers expressed their happiness to the emperor over the fact that the *pir* of the Hindus,

Guru Tegh Bahadur, had fallen into their hands, and said, "If you can make him accept our religion, then thousands of Hindus will automatically convert to Islam." "God has thrown him into my hands. If he still does not accept our religion, he faces torture. That will make him relent," said the emperor. Then the Turks started torturing the Guru's body with cruelty that is beyond description. It was only the Guru who could bear it. Anybody else in his place would have yielded to their demand in no time. On the second or third day, the emperor came to the Guru and offered governorship of any province of the Guru's choice, adding, "You will not have to furnish any accounts. The heavens will be yours. I, along with my sons, shall become your follower and shall establish kinship with you. But you must accept our religion."

"Stop this nonsense. You can do whatever you like. This will never happen. Who can undo what the Creator has ordained. Whatever has been ordained by Him, only that shall happen. Nothing else," replied the Guru. The Turks tried all kinds of tactics. But the Guru remained firm, like the Sumer Mountain braves the worst storms. At that time the Sikh prayed, "I cannot tolerate such unworthy behaviour towards you. Pray, permit me to destroy the Emperor along with his Empire."

"Where did you get these powers from?" asked the Guru.

"O True King, it is from your service that such powers have corne to me, I have not seen any other door," replied the Sikh.

"Listen, O Sikh, do you think that he who gave you these powers, has none of these himself?" asked the Guru.

"Your powers have no limit," replied the Sikh. Then the Guru told him not to speak. "The Lord has caused the events." At this the Sikh became quiet. Later, another Sikh wrote a prayer addressed to the Tenth Lord, on behalf of the Ninth Mahal. The following *doha* formed part of the prayer:

'All strength is gone; thrown in bonds is this frame;

No effort avails.
Prayeth Nanak: Lord, you are my sole support.
Succour me as you did the (mythological) elephant.'

The reply of the Tenth Master was this couplet:

'Lo, strength has arrived;
The bonds are snapped asunder.
Every thing is within your control,
The strength is there,
Saith Nanak, you alone are my helper.'

Then the Guru caused this to happen. The Guru ordered one of the Sikhs with him in prison, "In the ambrosial hours of the morning, when I finish recitation of the Japu ji, and bow my head in obeisance, you shall sever my head from my body." "O True King, if you get this done through me, what will be my fate?" asked the Sikh. "You will be with me, wherever I am," replied the Guru. At this the Sikh bowed in obeisance. In the morning the

Guru had his bath and completed recitation of the *Japu ji*, offered the *Ardas*, and bowed his head before the Lord. The Sikh was asked to carry out his assignment. At this the Sikh severed the Guru's head from the body.

As this news reached the Emperor, the Sikh was also executed, and strict watch ordered, so that the Guru's body could not be taken away. The Tenth Master was at Anandpur then. He ordered the Ranghreta Sikhs to bring the Guru's body to Anandpur, and gave his blessings to them. The Ranghreta Sikhs bowed in obeisance. They loaded a bullock cart with hay, stole the body during the night, and presented it to the Guru at Anandpur. The Guru blessed them, honouring the Ranghretas as "Sons of the Guru." The body reached Anandpur and the head fell into the hands of the Delhi Sikhs. The body was cremated at Anandpur, and the head at Delhi. At both places sandal wood was used at the pyre. Flowers and petals were heaped on the Guru's *biban*. The whole atmosphere was filled with fragrance of incense, and sweetness of scents and perfumes. Saffron was sprinkled. Conch shells were blown, and celestial music sounded all round. There was a prolonged shout of victory. Angels from heaven came to witness the scenes of shouts of victory. The sidhas, the saints, all came to shower flowers on the Guru's biban, happy to hear the praise of the Guru. (12)

STORIES OF THE TENTH MAHAL

Episode No. 13

ZAFARNAMAH

The departure of Guru Tegh Bahadur gave a rude shock to the Sikhs who started bewailing. The Guru consoled them, saying, "O Sikhs, the Guru treated life and death alike. He was God's own image while living. After leaving his body, he merged with the Lord. He who mourns his death, is mistaken." This consoled the Sikhs. The Guru explained, "It was necessary to expose the falsehood of the Turks, which has been done. Now it is our turn to destroy the Turks. They inflicted torture on Guru Tegh Bahadur. The Guru had not usurped any of their territories. He had not killed any of their men. They perpetrated this cruelty in the name of their religion. They have committed a sin. Their falsehood has been demonstrated by the tortures to such an enlightened soul. In fact, they have committed suicide. Guru Tegh Bahadur has exposed the hypocrisy of the Turks. It will be my job to finish them."

A long time passed. Then the Khalsa was ordered, "Let us now go to war with the Turks and destroy them." "The Turks are very wicked. They are accompanied by a million horsemen. But we shall obey," replied the Khalsa. "All right, let us kill the Turk with a letter. When he reads my letter, he will die," said the Guru. "O True King, you are the doer of all actions. Do whatever pleases, you." Then the Guru addressed a letter to Aurangzeb. The letter was titled, ‘Zafarnamah'. This was written in great detail. But here we reproduce a brief sample of it. The letter covered several pages, and contained a large number of quartets, dealing with the role of the emperor, besides the Guru's point of view. The Guru recorded his version thus: "God seated you on the throne to dispense justice, and not injustice. But ever since you took over, you have indulged in injustice. You have not done a single act of justice. Firstly, you did injustice to me. I lived on barren rocky land, making no claims. I made no encroachments on your land. I did not subsist on any village granted by you. I was living like a faqir. You killed my father, without any offence, and marched your armies on me in conjunction with the rajahs. These rajahs are as unjust as you are yourself. You collaborated to kill my sons, women and Sikhs. You plundered my treasure and took away my horses. I have received this treatment because of your policies of injustice, pursued only in your house. Against this, the House of the Lord dispenses justice, so that not even the slightest good done by anybody is overlooked, nor is the slightest evil ignored. Both bear fruit. When He sits on judgement, He will ask you, 'What harm was done to you by Ram Das (sic. Guru Tegh Bahadur), for which you tortured him so much? Beware, that time is very near. Do not consider it distant. I shall be a witness to it. Think of some explanation, for otherwise you will be condenmed to hell. All hells have been created for the unjust. There, a king's request for justice is attended to after others. You take pride in earning your living through labour, and think that you will be forgiven on that account. This plea does not hold water. Horses toil for their feed. That does not make them saints. And if you believe that since you recite the Quran, you will be forgiven, this argument is equally untenable. You have recited it merely with your tongue. Nobody can claim forgiveness without good deeds. The *dagra* bird has the whole Quran written on its wings, but that does not make it a saint, any more than your hope of being forgiven on the plea that you meditate. So, you can forget about that also. Worship or meditation does not consist in reciting a few verses. Real worship is supressing evil desires, i.e., to control the mind, not to be led by it. But you have been doing everything to satisfy the evil desires of

your mind. You killed your father to satisfy your mind. You killed your brothers, Dara Shikoh and Murad Bakhsh, because of the same desires. Is this meditation? So this claim of yours is also not acceptable. That is why the Prophet has said that he who does not follow his command, shall not be entitled to his blessing. One has to give up the evil acts forbidden by the Prophet, and obey his commands. Only such persons shall be entitled to patronage of the Prophet. But those who ignore his commandments, in pursuit of mundane objects, are referred to in the Quran as 'dogs'. This means that this world is like a corpse, and that is what a dog seeks. Why would the Prophet help such dogs? So this claim of yours is also invalid. And if you feel that you are destroying idolatry of the Hindus, and that this will save you, this is equally without substance. You have destroyed a statue where tens of thousands of Hindus paid their obeisance and would not eat before doing that. This was their routine. So, when you demolished that statue, idols appeared in every house. Some made the idols out of flour; others used wax or clay. They had to carry out their routine before they could take their meals. So, if you had not broken one statue, tens of thousands of new idols would not have come up. By breaking one statue you created a hundred thousand idols. The real statue is 'ego' or selfishness, which is the mother of all idols. Those who have conquered their ego, have in reality destroyed idolatry:

> Destroy thy ego; this is real idol-breaking.
> Free thyself from ego; this is real release.

And if you think you are a strict follower of Shariat (Islamic Code), and for this reason you will be forgiven, this belief of yours is also wrong. Like you, followers of other religions also observe their own religious codes with equal strictness. All religious codes are similar. Because of ignorance, people think one is superior to others. If only such codes could save people, who would worship the Lord? He who expects salvation without meditation, and grace of His saints is mistaken. Also, if you feel that people flatter you, and on this account you will be forgiven, you are mistaken there also. Sycophants used to flatter Pharoh also for their selfish motives. That Pharoh was condemned by the Lord to burn in hell. Real praise is deserved by one whose heart follows the dictates of the Lord's saints. He is praiseworthy, whether others praise him or condemn him. Again you might believe that the Lord is benevolent and that His benevolence will save you. There are two answers to this. One, He blesses only the poor and the humble who are ft.ee from ego in their hearts. The second answer is that the Lord possesses both the attributes; He dispenses benevolence as well as punishment. In case you have been benevolent to others, He will dole out benevolence to you, and if you have been cruel, you will also get the same treatment at His hands. It never happens that you sow *kikar (Acacia*) and harvest mangoes. You will reap only what you sow."

The letter contained the warning, "Beware! The Khalsa is born, the real idol-breaker Khalsa. Khalsa will punish you. You will not be spared." The name of the messenger who took this letter was Bhai Daya Singh. When Aurangzeb read this line of the letter, he looked at Bhai Daya Singh and asked,

"Has the Khalsa taken birth?"

"Yes Sir, the Khalsa has appeared," replied Bhai Daya Singh.

"It should not have appeared at this time. I see doom ahead," saying this, Aurangzeb's face turned pale, and he died. (13)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 14

PURITY OF MIND

Aurangzeb's son, Bahadur Shah succeeded him. But his brothers dethroned him. As he was fleeing, Guru Baba, with his powers reached him, and said, "Bahadur Shah, where are you going? I have come to help you. Come with me. I shall fight your brothers and put you back on the throne." Thus Bahadur Shah became the Guru's ally. The Guru caused armies from the heavens to appear, which frightened Bahadur Shah's brothers. Bahadur Shah was crowned emperor. A Sikh said, "O True Lord, you have done extreme kindness to Bahadur Shah." The Guru replied, "In his previous birth, he had served the Guru with devotion. For this reason this help has been rendered to him."

From that day Bahadur Shah showed great respect for the Guru. He would regularly send his offerings of fruit, etc. He wrote several letters expressing his affection, gratitude and longing to meet the Guru. He invited the Guru to meet him. The Guru waS proceeding to the South. Agra, where Bahadur Shah was camping, was on his way.

So, in response to Bahadur Shah's letters the Guru visited him. Bahadur Shah showed great respect and made rich offerings. Ba11adur Shah's Turk minister (qazi) asked the Guru, "Guruji, which is better, your religion or our religion?" "Your religion is good (perfect) for you, and our religion is good for us," replied the Guru. "Guru ji, our religion is such that when somebody is initiated into it and recites the. *kalima*, we can sit together and eat as equals. Nobody minds this. Is this also possible in your religion that when some Musalman is converted to say Ram, will you eat with him?" "When we come to power, you will have the liberty to do as you like," replied the Guru. This satisfied the minister. Then the qazi asked this question, "Guru ji, the Lord has said that man has been created to worship Him. What kind of worship should a man do?" "One should get rid of sins, and still regard himself a sinner. In this state of mind one should worship the Lord."

"Guru ji, when somebody is free from sins, how can his heart accept the feeling of being a sinner? He might say this from his lips. In that case will the Lord accept what the lips say? Will He not look into his heart?"

"The Lord will look into his heart."

"His heart is conscious that he is free from sin. How will the heart accept that he is a sinner?"

“There are two kinds of purity, purity of the body and purity of the mind. Purity of the body means that one makes an effort and prevents the body from committing a sin. To keep the body from committing a sin is the purity of the body. And the purity of the mind means freeing the mind of ego. But one cannot get rid of ego with one's effort alone. When the Lord showers His Grace, one comes in contact with the perfect Guru, and only then, can one get rid of ego.

So, when one reaches the stage of bodily purity with his effort, he attains purity of body, but not purity of mind. At this stage should one accept the mind's propensity as sin or not?" The qazi agreed that in this case it has to be accepted.

The Guru continued, "It is a fact, and not fiction, that when a worldly being frees his body from sins, and looking at his ego finds himself a sinner, then the Lord showers His Grace on him, and he thus becomes purified, because he did not become boastful of his earlier achievement. Rather he put himself on the nobler path to the Lord." The Guru illustrated this with the example of a tree. "The goal is reached only when the fruit does not fall at an immature stage. The one that falls at an unripe stage, does not experience the joy of maturity. Similarly, one who swells his head with a minor achievement, can never get rid of his ego. It means that those who attained purity of body, did not necessarily achieve freedom from ego also. Only those become free from ego, who having reached the stage of purity of body, still regard themselves as sinners." Evidence from the Book was also given. "In the Ouran the Lord says: 'Anybody who has come to me as a sinner, I have given him status of the pure.' It means that in the Court of the Lord, those who have met the perfect Guru, have attained freedom from ego as well. When one is freed from ego, he/she has realised his/her goal." This was the dialogue the Guru had with the qazi, who was indeed very happy. (14)

ANOTHER STORY RELATED

Episode No. 15

OFFERINGS TO THE GURU ARE DEPOISTS

Once, the Guru invited Pandas from Kanshi, and organised a *hom* through them. The Khalsa Panth was created. "Guru ji, if you permit, we would like to ask some questions," said the Pandas.

"Sure, do not hesitate," replied the Guru.

"Guru ji, the Vedas prescribe different duties (dharam) for each caste (varan) ,specifying that a particular varan should not perform the functions of other varans. According to the Vedas, it is the function of the Brahmins to accept offerings. And the duty of the Kshatris is to make offerings. You belong to the Kshatri varan. How is it that you accept offerings from the world, while according to your varan it is not in order for you to do so? The proper thing for you would be to give offerings or charity. How do you justify your accepting offerings from the public? This doubt has arisen in our minds. Kindly explain this to us."

"Respected Pandas, it is good you have asked this question. Now listen to the answer. Acceptance of offerings is of two kinds. One is accepting a charity. The other is accepting a deposit. In the latter case, he appears to be taking it. But he is in fact not taking anything. Rather he is doing a favour by accepting its custody. An illustration will make the point clear. There was a king to whom the services of astrologers were available. They were perfect, and whatever they predicted, always came true. The king had tested them several times. Once the astrologers told him, there will be a huge fire in your city, very widespread.' They predicted the month, date and the day also. The king asked if there would be any place in the town which would be safe, or everything would get destroyed. To this the astrologers replied, 'Only your mansions will be saved. All the remaining town will be burnt.' When the time arrived, the king made a public announcement to the effect that according to the astrologers, it was the Will of God that the whole of the town burn in a devastating fife. The citizens were advised to deposit their belongings at the royal mansions, to be taken back after the calamity was over. All residents of the town belonging to all varans followed the advice, and deposited their belongings with the king. They took their belongings back, when the danger was no more. Thus, when the king accepted their deposits, he did a favour to them. Similarly, when the public hands over money and other offerings to me, I keep it as a deposit like the king. I do not take any charity. The world is aflame with lust, rancour, etc. Whatever money is spent on such pursuits, goes down the drain. And whatever money is offered before the Guru, will be of avail to them. Whatever be their desires while making the offering, will be realised by the grace of the Guru."

"Guru ji, we did not know that you are a philospher. Hearing your philosophy has gladdened our hearts. We are indeed very grateful to you for the answers," said the Pandas. (15)

NEXT STORY FOLLOWS

Episode No. 16

DESTINY ACHIEVED THROUGH PRAYER

One summer when the Guru was travelling, he reached a garden where he camped for the day. It so happened that the king's pir (spiritual advisor), was also camping at the same place. Thus the Pir had a chance to meet Guru Baba. The pir called on the Guru, who seated him with due courtesy by his side. There was a town nearby where a number of Khatri Sikhs of the Guru lived. When they heard of the Guru's arrival at the garden, they all flocked to see the Guru with offerings of clothes, arms and money, besides food. The offerings were formally dedicated to the Guru by his attendants, who also prayed in their behalf for his blessings, success in temporal pursuits, protection from evil, and the boon of Naam.

The pir watched the proceedings for the whole day, and then put this question the Guru, "In our scriptures it is said that whatever is destined, is bound to happen. Something else can happen, only if what has been done previously is wrong. Since what has been done, cannot be wrong, there is no scope for anything else happening. So, when the Sikhs pray before you for success in their endeavours, what do they pray for, since nothing else can happen except what is destined?"

After hearing the pir's question the Guru took out his seal. He applied ink to the seal and stamped it on a piece of paper.

"Pir ji, this is the answer to your question," replied the Guru.

"Kindly explain this to me," said the pir.

"The letters on the seal were already there. These have not been written now. But the writer knew that when the seal bows its head to touch the paper, the reverse letters will become straight and get stamped on it. Similarly, the Creator has made this provision in one's destiny, so that when one appear before the Guru in humility and performs service, his adverse destiny is corrected. All his problems are solved. This reversal is as per destiny, and not otherwise. Thus, whatever has been said in your scriptures is correct. Nothing less and nothing more." At this answer the pir was very happy. (16)

NEXT STORY FOLLOWS

Episode No. 17

BLESSING OF SANGAT

Once the State Governor (subedar) carne to see the Guru with the question "O Guru, when you are pleased with a Sikh, what do you give him?"

"When I am pleased with a Sikh, I send to his house one who is dear to me, replied the Guru.

"Guruji, if you are very pleased with a Sikh, then what do you give him'!,'

"When I am more pleased with a Sikh, I send to his house, two of my dear ones."

"And if, Guruji, you are still more pleased, what would you give him?"

"In that case I would send three of my dear ones to his house."

The *subedar* continued to repeat his question, until the Guru had raised the number of dear ones to ten.

"When you send ten dear ones to a Sikh, what does the Sikh gain out of it?”

"The more the dear ones that visit a Sikh, the more is the praise and discussion of the Lord. In the company of saints, spiritual discussion automatically takes place. Whatever the Sikh hears will stay in his mind, and ultimately liberate him from the cycle of birth and death. At the same time his livelihood will flourish, and his family will also follow his example in serving the saintly persons, to become pure like him. Such are the benefits of a saint's visit." The reply pleased the *subedur.*

NEXT STORY FOLLOWS

Episode No. 18

MAN INCOMPLETE WITHOUT HAIR

Once, when the Guru was in the Lakhi jungle, a Sikh came and complained, "O True Emperor, the sangat coming to pay their obeisance to you, has been robbed by the Governor on the way." The Guru heard this, but made no reply. Next day another Sikh came and said, "O True Emperor, the sang at was coming to see you. The Governor has robbed them."

"Listen, Brother, why doesn't somebody say that the sangat has looted the Governor? But the sangat is right. They think that the earlier nine Patshahis only gave them rosary. Now they shall wield swords also. I shall make sparrows destroy hawks. Whoever is my Sikh, shall not be without hair and sword. Without hair and arms, man is incomplete, only half a man. Man is complete only with hair and arms," commanded the Guru. At the Guru's command, the Sikhs adopted unshorn hair as well as arms.

At the same time the Guru decided to train his Sikhs in the art of war. The Guru heard that there were groups of Sikhs, 3-4 miles away, coming to see him. The Guru sent for Bhai Dallah Brar, and instructed him thus, "O Dallah, summon your armies and give them lathis (sticks). The sangat is coming. Attack them and rob them. But nobody is to be killed. Even the booty is not to be destroyed or tampered with, because it will be returned. We want to train the sangat to fight and resist." On these instructions Dallah arranged for lathis and organised to attack the approaching sangat. In the mean time, the Guru had sent a horseman to the sangat with the message that the Guru was staying in the jungle as a guest, and that the rebel Jats of the area might attack and rob them. They were instructed to resist and fight back with all their might. At the Guru's instructions, they took up lathis and other arms with courage. They resisted the robbers. Loud din of the conflict reached the Guru's ears. The Guru climbed up a high spot, extremely happy over the fight. The Guru later explained that this is the way the sangat needs to be trained to fight. Later, he ordered preparation of karah parshad (holy pudding). When it was ready, he ordered, "Khalsa ii, go and loot." Then the karah was looted. This was repeated several times.

Once a large quantity of karah was prepared, and the Khalsa was instructed to loot it. At this most of the Sikhs went to loot it, but many stayed with the Guru. "Brother Sikhs, why did you not go to loot the karah?" asked the Guru.

"O True King, we would have eaten it, if it had been distributed. We are not among those who loot."

"You are blessed. In the Khalsa, there will be the Sikh spirit side by side with the capacity to loot," said the Guru.

After this, the Guru was always happy to see his Sikhs with arms. Offerings of money would not please the Guru so much as offerings of anns. Arms were almost worshipped, and incense was burnt.

One day the Guru desired that Bhai Dallah should be paid a daily allowance or salary from the Guru's treasury.

"O True King, give me rain," said Dallah.

"Salary we have, you can get whatever is with us. Rain is not under our control, which we can give you readily," said the Guru.

After several days the Guru again said, "Dallah, you must accept your salary from me."

"O True Emperor, give me rain," said Dallah.

The Guru made no answer. There had been a prolonged draught in that area. Several days passed. The Guru repeated, "O Dallah, you must take your salary from the Guru."

"O True Emperor, give me rain."

'When a Jat is determined he will make even a wall respond. We tried a lot to put him off, but he does not give up," the Guru remarked. Then turning to Dallah, he said, "Go and repair your water reservoirs." Then people were collected by beat of drum, and all the reservoirs were repaired. Guru Baba blessed the Jats with a prolonged heavy rain, until the Jats themselves requested that the rain should stop. (18)

NEXT STORY FOLLOWS

Episode No. 19

MASANDS EXPOSED

Once Mata ji addressed a message to the masands. "You collect lots of offerings from the sangat, which is not deposited into the Guru's treasury. Obviously, you mis-appropriate it. This is objectionable." The masands were infuriated at this. They sent this reply to Mata ii, "You should first teach your son to read and write. When he can do that, he can come, and we shall explain to him the accounts, the income as well as expenditure." Mata ji reported the masands' reply to the Guru who remarked, "Yes, if one wants to get the accounts from the masands, he has to become literate." Then the Guru asked for an inkpot and a writing board. The Sikhs burnt up the board, and said, "O True Emperor, The Lord writes the destiny of beings after consulting you. Who calls you illiterate? O True Emperor, you are the Guru omnipotent, the cause of all causes. Cursed be those who call you illiterate."

"Brother Sikhs, the masands aspire to be my rivals. They call themselves gurus. They expect you to respect them," said the Guru.

"O True Emperor, blackened are the faces of those who claim to be your rivals. Those who claim equality with you, shall have their faces blackened in the Lord's Court also," replied the Sikhs.

"Brothers, the Sikhs are all-powerful," remarked the Guru.

The masands who were there, heard this dialogue.

"O Brother masands, I accepted your advice and started learning. But the Sikhs do not let me do it. Now you should do this. I have with me some Sikhs who are educated. You can explain to them the accounts of income and expenditure," added the Guru. The masands resented this and left in protest.

According to earlier practice, the masands used to eat with the Guru. They refused to come for meals. The Guru also stopped eating. The masands had started eating at their own places. Therefore, the Sikhs pleaded that the Guru should also eat.

"Brothers, they are responsible for what they do. I have to carry out my own pledge. When my companions at meal come, only then shall I eat," replied the Guru.

Then the cooks and other prominent Sikhs went to the masands and implored them to come. But the more the Sikhs entreated, the more arrogant and abusive the masands became, using such unbecoming language as cannot be repeated.

"For the Guru's sake, come and eat. Four days have passed. The Guru has been without food. The Guru will eat only when you go there and eat," pleaded the Sikhs. When they came, they would look towards the Guru insolently in a defiant manner. They no more showed any respect or courtesy to him. They would speak such words in his presence, as "We have made you the Guru. If we quit, that would be the end of your guruship. But we

have been showing regards to the Seat. Although we do not see in you any characteristics of a Guru, at least the name of the Guru is there. We bow before the name."

The Guru took the taunts of the masands in his stride. In the process, however, the masands were thoroughly exposed. It became clear that the masands were like spoiled milk, which could yield no butter. They had basically degraded themselves and deserved punishment. Having lived on unearned offerings, they had lost their conscience. They had been appropriating the offerings during the tenure of the earlier nine Patshahis, also. For a very long time they had lived on religious offerings. The Guru decided that they should be made to furnish the earlier accounts, and that misappropriation should stop forthwith. Having taken this decision, the Guru prepared to punish the masands.

One day the Guru was sitting at *damdama*, at the head of the sangat. There was a big gathering. At that time a drama party appeared, and shouted aloud, "O True Emperor, with your permission we want to show a skit." The Guru allowed them, and told them to play a skit of the masands. The Guru added, "The role of the masands should be depicted accurately without fear." The Guru had made up his mind to award suitable punishment to the guilty masands

The actors presented a very revealing scene. This showed a masand moving about with a prostitute on each side, and a man to serve liquor behind. An attendant was leading his horse. Relatives of the prostitutes followed. With this retinue, the masand entered the house of a poor Sikh, and sat on a covered cot. The prostitutes started singing and dancing. The Sikh prepared a simple meal of dal, and took the masand to the kitchen to eat. The meal infuriated the masand. He tossed the chapatis in one direction and the dal in another, and walked out in anger. The Sikh imploringly asked, "O kind Sir, what kind of meal would please your honour? What kind of meal shall we prepare?" The masand replied, "You sinner, the Guru has graced your house. You have prepared a meal that even dogs will not eat. We shall eat only what is worthy of us. Prepare karah with ghee and sugar, and cook meat with proper salt and condiments to match." The Sikh was poor. He sold his wife's ornaments and prepared the kind of meal demanded by the masand. Only then did the masand and the prostitutes accept the meal. On the second day the masand said, "O Sikh, be quick and bring your offering." The Sikh mortgaged his quilt and offered one rupee bowing in deep reverence before the masand. The masand got up and kicked the Sikh hard four/five times. He threw the rupee towards the prostitutes and said, "Guru's curse on you for offering so little."

After witnessing the skit, the Guru asked, "Is this how the masands go about torturing Sikhs?" The Drama Party said, "O True Emperor, we have in fact underplayed their torture. The real torture is ten times more." The Guru ordered, "Khalsa ji, catch them immediately; do not let them escape." At the Guru's command the Khalsa fell on the masands and captured hundreds of them. With their own clothes tied round their necks, they were produced before the Guru. They were ordered to be locked in rooms. The Sikhs obeyed. For five days and five nights they stayed in confinement. Then thick wooden poles were fixed in the ground and they were tied to these. Each masand was then whipped with fine twigs, until a whole bunch broke in the process. When the flogging of one batch finished, another batch was taken out of the cells and dealt with suitably. The trials continued for several days. Some of them died of starvation. Many succumbed to cane beating. In some cases, boiling oil was poured over their heads, and they were made

to recite the verse which means, "As is reckoning called at the Portal, shall evil-doers be crushed, like sesame grains yielding oil." One ladle of hot oil was enough to kill.

"Brothers, masand is a lame tiger. When a lame tiger gets hold of his prey, he does not spare even its bones," said the Guru. Thus, all the masands that had been captured were punished. None was spared.

As soon as the Guru returned to his damdama, the first proclamation made by the beat of drum was: "Let everybody know, the Perfect Master has issued a command to all elders, brother Sikhs, servants, youngsters, supporters, faqirs, brave Sikhs and others that whoever is the Guru's Sikh, shall have no truck with a masand, even on the occasion of marriage or death. Whoever is the Guru's Sikh, shall enter into no matrimonial relationship with a masand through his son or daughter. Whoever is the Guru's Sikh, shall never accompany a masand during travel. If there is a choice between two lanes, one leading to a deadly rogue elephant and the other to a masand, he will take the former, and shall never meet a masand."

Another day, when the Guru adorned his high seat, a man suddenly appeared and cried, "O True, Emperor, I have become guilty of cow-slaughter." The Guru instructed the attendant to conduct him nearer to him. On being asked the man repeated, "O True Emperor, I am guilty of the ultimate sin of cow-slaughter."

“Don’t be stupid. You appear to be under unfluence of a masand. That is why you are upset and are lamenting thus. So what if a cow has died. Go home and relax. It is the Lord alone, and none else, who kills or revives,” said the Guru. (19)

ANOTHER STORY FOLLOWS

Episode No. 20

CONVERSION IS VOLUNTARY

One day when the Guru was presiding over the sangat, a man came crying, "The Turks (Muslims) have converted me to their religion."

"How could they convert you to the religion of Turks?" asked the Guru.

"O True King, they have circumcised me."

"One does not become a Turk by circumcision alone. What else have they done to you?"

"They have forced beef into my mouth."

"This also does not convert you to Islam. What else did they do?"

"O True Emperor, they forced me to recite their kalima." "By reciting the kalima also one does not become a Muslim. Anything else they did?".

"No," replied the man.

"You have not been converted. Go and relax," said the Guru.

At this a Sikh from the congregation asked, "O True Emperor, pray tell us how one is converted to Islam?"

"It is only when one willingly indulges in sex with a Muslim woman that one gets converted, and not otherwise," said the Guru. (20)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 21

GURU'S PATIENCE WITH SINNERS

One day, while the Guru sat at the head of the sangat, a man came to complain that his pocket had been picked by thugs. The attendant was instructed to seat him by the Guru's side. The attendant obeyed. Then another man came with the same complaint. Thugs had picked his pocket too. The Guru instructed his attendant to seat him also by his side. The attendant seated them both together. Then a third ma.n arrived saying that his pocket, too, had been picked. The attendant was again instructed to seat him with the other two. The attendant seated all three together. Then a fourth man came complaining that thugs had picked his pocket too. The Guru instructed him also to join the other victims. The attendant seated all four together. Then the Guru called the attendant and told him who the pickpocket was. The attendant at once caught him and produced him before the Guru.

"Search his pockets," instructed the Guru. All the four purses were recovered from his pocket. All the four persons who were sitting there identified their purses, which were restored to them.

"You, along with~your family, prayed that you wanted to pick three pockets from among my .fangat. You prayed for forgiveness for the crime. You had promised to pick only three. If you had honoured your commitment, you could be spared. But by picking the fourth pocket you have spoiled your own case. Now get away. Else, you will pay for your doings," said the Guru.

"O True Emperor, you are the perfect Lord. This is exactly what happened. I did not fulfil my commitment to you. Fault is with me. I deserved this," said the thug. (21)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 22

GURU IS ALL-KNOWING

One day, as usual, the Guru occupied his high seat in the midst of a big gathering. The next day was a festival day. The Guru instructed that nobody should be allowed to leave, so that they could attend the following day's function also. Accordingly, check-posts were set up, to prevent people from leaving. One of the groups wanted to leave under all circumstances. They resorted to a trick. They organised an elaborate funeral procession for a dead body, and put a living man in place of the corpse. They marched singing the hymn: "The love of God's servant till the last has remained constant. While living, the Lord he served; at departure also his mind was fixed on Him." They believed that there was no possibility of leaving otherwise, and that they would be able to go on the pretext of a funeral. Thus, singing and playing instruments, they approached the Guru who was in his seat granting audience to hundreds of thousands of devotees. The attendant was instructed to tell them to bring the bier to the Guru, and sing the hymns in his presence. The Sikhs laid the bier and started kirtan. The attendant was instructed to bring a burning faggot and set fire to the bier. As soon as the flame approached the bier, the man on it got up and fled with the ardasia (attendant) chasing him over an arrow-flight distance. Everybody laughed and the Guru also enjoyed. He said, "The dead man has reached heavens along with his body, whom are you going to cremate now?" The Sikhs bowed their heads in shame.

"O True Emperor, these Sikhs are really feeling very much ashamed. Forgive them," pleaded a Sikh.

"They have indeed brought shame on themselves. The exposure is all in their own interest. If we had not exposed their trick, they would have carried home the impression that just as other men could not discover their trick, the Guru too could be deceived, and they would regard the Guru just like any other man. In that case, seeing the Guru would not confer any spiritual benefit on them. Now in their trick having been expose.d, they have benefited in every way. They will now regard the Guru as Guru," explained the Master. (22)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 24

GURU'S SIKHS ARE RARE

One day, the Guru was seated on a high place, it was a special festival, and consequently, there was a big congregation of people from far and near. A Sikh addressed the Guru thus, "O True Emperor, on this occasion a hundred thousand Sikhs have arrived."

"Bhai, Sikhs are rare. How can you find a hundred thousand Sikhs?" asked the Guru.

"O True Emperor, all those who come to the Guru for his darshan, claim to be Sikhs," replied the Sikh.

"Bhai, Sikhs belong to their sikhnis (wives) and the sikhnis belong to their Sikhs (husbands). The Guru's Sikhs are very rare. Just watch." A Sikh lady was standing nearby. The Guru looked in her direction and said, "Lady, where is your Sikh?"

"My Sikh is standing there," replied the lady.

The Guru instructed her to bring him, and she brought him to the Guru. The Guru looked towards the Sikh and asked, "Where is your sikhni?" The Sikh pointed to his wife and said, "O True Emperor, here is my sikhni. "

"Did you see this drama? The Sikhs belong to their sikhnis, and the sikhnis' belong to their Sikhs. Are not the Guru's Sikhs rare? And those sikhnis who are disciples of their Sikhs are not real Sikhs. He alone is a Sikh who belongs to the Guru, and likewise too, sikhnis are those who are disciples of the Guru. Others are only Sikhs by name," remarked the Guru. (24)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 25

REAL SHAME

Once the Guru was camping somewhere. A big crowd of people gathered around him. Among the visitors was an ascetic Muslim faqir who held roses in his palms. It was winter time. Pushing through the crowd he elbowed his way to the Guru, and presented the flowers to him. The Guru looked at the faqir, and said, "Faqir, you need not have taken the trouble of bringing flowers."

"O True King, coming with empty hands would be a cause of shame," replied the faqir. This is a Persian proverb that the faqir was repeating.

"No, for afaqir, empty hands is the way of kings. It is an empty heart that is the cause, of shame for anyone. If one's heart is filled with contentment, a faqir is king of kings, even though his hands may be empty. But when one's heart is devoid of contentment and feeling for the Lord, that is a cause for shame," explained the Guru.

"True Emperor, I have been rewarded for my visit. Perfect are the words of the Perfect, and complete are the words of the Complete," exclaimed the faqir. (25)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 26

KIRTAN EMPHASISED

"True Emperor, I have a complaint against the rababis (musicians) sitting by your side," complained a Sikh to the Guru.

"O Sikh, what is your complaint against the rababis? Tell us in detail."

"True Emperor, last night I had recited 23 cantos of Sukhmani Sahib, when they started playing the rebeck. I requested them to let me recite the last one canto to complete the recitation, after which they could start singing the shabad. They refused to listen to me and started singing the shabad. This is my complaint against them."

"Listen, O Sikh, the rababis cannot be held guilty on this account. You were giving dry grains to the sangat to munch, while the rababis were offering them cakes. And one who also gives explanation or exposition of the shabad, serves delicacies of jalebis. So, in this case, the rababis cannot be accused of any offence."

The rababis got up, bowed their heads at the Guru's feet and said, "O True Emperor, we were feeling guilty. But mercifully you have exonerated us." (26)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 27

WEALTH IS OF NO CONSEQUENCE

Once a Sikh made an offering of gold bangles studded with pearls to the Guru, and said, "O True Emperor, kindly wear these bangles in my presence. I want to see them on your wrists. Pray fulfil this desire of mine." The (Guru obliged and put the bangles on his wrists, acceding to the Sikh's desire. Later the Guru went to the river for a bath, where he lost one of the bangles. This made Mata ji unhappy. The bangle was very precious. Every effort was made to recover it. Boatmen were commissioned and divers called. A large numher of swimmers also tried in vain! Eventually, Mata ji took the child-Guru to the site saying. "My son, show me the bathing spot of the river where you lost the bangle." The (Guru took the other bangle off his wrist and tossed it into the river, saying, "Mata ji search this place. Where this bangle has dropped, there must be the other also." Aghast, the mother said, "My dear son, what have you done? You have lost the second bangle also." "Ujri, these bangles had to go, so what if instead of tomorrow this has happened today? What are you lamenting? Go home and relax," said the Guru. The mother's name was Gujri. By way of a joke the Guru called her 'Ujri' (homeless). The mother returned, having lost the second bangle as well. (27)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 28

GURU ABOVE PLEASURE AND PAIN

Once the Guru was, engaged in a prolonged war with the empire. In this, war all the four sahibzadas (Guru's sons), Jujhar Singh, Ajit Singh, Ranjit Singh and Fateh Singh fell martyrs. A large number of Sikhs also died. The treasury, the horses and the entire wealth were plundered by the enemy. All this happened at Anandpur. When the Sikhs had to evacuate, they started bewailing.

"Brothers, why do you bewail? The Guru has lost nothing," said the Guru.

"O True Empcror, all the four sahibzada have become martyrs; treasures, horses and wealth have gone; Sikhs have died. That is why we mourn."

"Sahibzadas will keep coming for the sake of faith. The treasures, horses and properly were all the creation of God. Under His Will these were acquired. Under His Will these disappeared." The Guru asked the Sikhs to draw lines in the dust with their hands. The Sikhs drew lines in the dust with their hands, and rubbed them off at the Guru's command.

"Do you feel sad or happy over drawing these lines or rubbing them off'!" asked the Guru.

"O True Emperor, we have felt nothing of the kind."

"Just as you did not experience any happiness or sorrow over the drawing or obliteration of the line" in the same way the Guru did not feel happy or sad over the acquisition or loss of material possessions. Grasp this thing in your hearts firmly. The Guru is above happiness or sorrow."

"O True Emperor, the losses run into hundreds of thousands."

"But you have gained an insight which is worth tens of millions," said the Guru. (28)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 29

MYTHICAL GODS NOT WORTHY OF WORSHIP

Once the Guru reached the Lakhi jungle. It was summer time, & there were a lot of ripe *penjhu* fruits. Many Sikhs plucking & eating them. That made the Sikhs very thirsty, & they requested the Guru. “O True Emperor, we have eaten *penjhu* fruits, & we are very thirsty, but there is no water.”

“Give Indra(god of rain) seven shoes on his head. Then you will get rain,” said the Guru. The Sikhs dealt seven shoe blows on Indra’s head. And Lo! It started raining heavily, which lasted a long time, & the Sikhs felt chilly. The Sikhs again approached the Guru & prayed, “O True Emperor, due to heavy rain the Sikhs are feeling cold.”

“Again give Indra seven shoe blows on his head. The rain will stop,” said the Guru.

The Sikhs obeyed, & the rain stopped. (29)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 30

FIGHTING PROWESS OF THE GURU

Once the Guru was camping on a hill. Armies of the rajahs came to engage him in battle.

"Khalsa ji, go and fight the rajahs," ordered the Guru. At the Guru's command the Khalsa proceeded to fight the rajahs. The rajahs, however, far outnumbered them and the Khalsa could not hold its own against them. They sent a horseman to the Guru with this report, "The Khalsa is retreating under pressure of the rajahs." The Guru at once took the bow and arrow in his hands, stood on his cot, touched the earth with his arrow on the four sides, and in a loud voice recited the sloka: "Degh Tegh Fateh Bedrang Simrite Guru Nanak Fateh Guru Gobind Singh." ("Victory in battle, and prosperity; Concentrate on Guru Nanak, victory is with Guru Gobind Singh.") Reciting this he pulled the bow string with all his might and shot the arrow into the sky. The sky echoed and the mountain shuddered. All men standing on the hill fell to ground because of shuddering, and repeatedly beseeched the Guru to protect them. The hills shuddered for some time. Soon it was calm again. The Guru sent the horseman back to the Khalsa with the message, "Go and fight the rajahs without any fear. Victory will be yours." At this command from the Guru the Khalsa pounced upon the rajahs, and won. (30)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 31

WAR ETIQUETTE

The Khalsa had another encounter with the rajahs, in which the rajahs fled like cowards. Many of them were slain by the Khalsa. The news reached the Guru that the Khalsa had killed the rajahs, and that the others that remained, would also be slain, since the Khalsa was pursuing them and was in no mood to spare them. The Guru gave his dagger to some *musaddi*, his head cloth to another, his long scarf to still another, his ring to still another, and an arrow to another one, by way of authentication, with the instructions that the Khalsa should stop the pursuit as soon as they see memorabilia.

"O True Emperor, today we were in a position to liquidate them, such that they could never have faced us again. But we have returned on your orders," complained the Khalsa as they returned.

"O Khalsa, this is our sport. We do not want to finish it all in one day. We shall continue to play this game by and by," said the Guru. (31)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 32

SHUN PRIDE AND EGO IN VICTORY

In most of the scuffles, the Khalsa was victorious against the rajahs. The Guru sensed that the Khalsa had begun to harbour vanity in their mind. One day he sent the Khalsa to fight the rajahs, and he himself withdrew. When the Khalsa learnt that the Guru had left, they abandoned the fight to follow the Guru. The armies of the rajahs pursued and slayed the Khalsa soldiers. Sikh horsemen rode at top speed to the Guru and said, "O True Emperor, the armies of the enemy are slaying us. Have mercy and issue a personal command to attack the enemy, so that their army can be thrown off." The Sikhs entreated repeatedly, but the Guru would not listen, and continued his march. Nor did he give them any answer. Then some more Sikhs came running, followed by more and more. All of them prayed, "O Guru, have mercy and stop." The Guru did not relent, and continued to move on. One of the Sikhs alighted from his horse and drew a line in front of the Guru's horse named Jan Bhai.

"Jan Bhai, in the Guru's name please stop and do not cross this line," said the Sikh. The horse stopped there and then, and would not cross the line. The Guru used his whip and his spurs to goad the horse, besides cursing him. But the horse would move backwards only. "Jan Bhai, I know you. In your last birth you were a *masand*. You have lived on their crumbs. How can you disobey them" said the Guru and alighted from horseback. The Khalsa gathered around the Guru, sitting on a cot. Then the Guru himself ordered the Khalsa to atlack the rajahs. With the Guru's blessings, the Khalsa liquidated the rajahs, resulting in the Guru's victory. The Guru continued his journey. (32)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 33

KEY TO HAPPINESS

Once *Mata ji* developed some physical ailment. When the Guru came for his meals, she prayed, "O True Emperor, I have suffered much pain. Pray give me comfort and relief from this suffering."

"O Mother, you want comfort and relief for yourself. Have you yourself ever given these to anybody?" asked the Guru.

"In what way can I do that?" replied Mata ji.

"Have you ever served a meal to anybody? Have you ever offered cold water to anybody? Have you ever fanned anybody? Have you ever massaged a tired person?"

"O True Emperor, because of you, there are so many people eager to serve food and water, to wield the fan and to do the massaging, that many of them do not even get a turn to perform these services. How can I do that?"

"Mata ji, he alone can get comfort or peace, who gives it to others. This is the Law laid down by the Lord Himself. And if you have not given comfort to anybody, how can you aspire for it yourself?"

"O True King, the past is past. In future I shall do as you say."

"Very well said," remarked the Guru, "now let us proceed like this. Let us hold a big feast, cook wholesome, delicious food including luchis, jalebis, kichoris, and invite all the four vamas. We should seek the pleasure and blessings of all."

Mata ji complied with the wishes of the Guru. A huge feast was organised. All the four vamos were invited. Followers of all the six systems of philosophy were invited, and all near and dear ones as well as those distantly connected, joined. All showered their blessings. The feast continued for several days, with no restrictions. "Dear Mother, now you have earned the pleasure of so many. Therefore, you will also have comfort ahd peace," said the Guru. Thus ended Mata ji's ailment. (33)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 34

LESSONS IN ENDURANCE AND SCORCHED EARTH POLICY

Once the Guru was in his fort on the bank of the Satluj river. He got his treasury opened and took stock of the contents through the Sikhs.

"O True Emperor, it is many lakhs ," reported the Sikhs.

"Throw the money into the Satluj river, and debit it to the River's account," ordered the Guru. The Sikhs obeyed, threw the money into the river and entered it against the Satluj river.

"Now take out such articles as can be burnt in fire," ordered the Guru next. The Sikhs took out all such articles, including silk, florescents, masroo, soosi lacha, naringsahi baftas, kimkhab, gold-fibre turbans, chhint, banat and tansukh. Countless such costly articles were taken out and piled in a heap. An inventory was prepared by the Sikhs. They reported, "O True Emperor, the articles are valued at severallakhs."

"Set fire to them and debit it against the account of Baisantar," ordered the Guru. The Sikhs set fire to it, and debited the value to the account of Baisantar (god of fire). Somebody stole a string of a bow. The Guru got him beaten with battens. The bullock carts of the ardasia Sikhs were grounded, so that they could not take away anything in them. Instructions were given not to feed any grains to the horses, and to let them starve. The hay stacks were ordered to be burnt. The Sikhs were to be given a ration of only five sarsahis (one sarsahi is 20 grams) of grains. At this time, the rajahs mounted their attacks. Battles became very frequent, and food was not available. The Sikhs would go to battle with belts tightened, and the Guru ordered them to go one by one and fight single-handed, and not in groups. Many devoted Sikhs came and offered their services, saying, "O True Emperor, we offer our heads to you."

"Blessed are you, O Sikh. Go and fight," said the Guru in return. Thus, the Sikh would go alone and fight. Each Sikh would kill as many as five or seven aggressors. Sitting at a vantage point the Guru watched the drama. Many Sikhs became martyrs fighting this way, and many more were wounded. Many Sikhs lay suffering due to hunger. Some even ground stone to eat. Some would make loaves of simbal tree bark. At this stage one of the good Sikhs beseeched the Guru thus, "The Sikhs,are your followers as well as your servants. Hostilities with the rajahs continue. They cannot fight on empty stomachs. If they get one seer (approximately one kilogram) of grains daily, then they can fight properly. The rest will be as you wish."

"The Guru has no enemies. Nor is he himself anybody's enemy. Whatever situation has been contrived, has been created for the benefit of the Sikhs themselves. I have no other purpose. Whatever money there is with me, is all from offerings. Such maya is a form of poison. It is deadly poison. It was the money from offerings that corrupted the masands and led to their punishment. Correct? The Sikhs have come to me in the hope that the Guru will free them from the cycle of birth and death. If I feed them on this kind of offerings, they will surely be condemned to the cycle of eighty-four lakhs of species of life,

and while they look to me for salvation, I shall be ruining their lives in stead. But I am not the type of Guru to ruin them. The Guru's money is like poison to the Sikhs, but the Sikhs do not know this. It is clear to me. For example, if milk is poisoned by a deadly snake, and the mother has seen it, while the child has not seen it, she will throw it on a heap of manure. And even if the child cries for the milk, the mother will never give it to him, because she loves the child. The mother will feed the child on this milk only if she considers the child her enemy. As the mother loves her child, similarly, I love my Sikhs. I will never feed them on these poisonous offerings. Living in this world is like a dream. Time will pass. So, why turn one's face away from God? This is how I feel. And listen to one thing more. The Sikhs who offer their heads to me, do so only when they are hungry. They offer their heads when they feel that it is better to die one day than to be dying everyday. The reward they get for dying, prompts them to fight. To entitle them to this reward, and to encourage others to follow their example to sacrifice their lives like moths on a flame, such situations are created, a~ involve hunger and battles. All these circumstances are ultimately in the interest of the Sikh~," replied the Guru. When the Guru uttered these words, the Sikhs listened with attention, and took them to their hearts. Those who put the words into practice, were freed from the cycle of birth and death. Their faith in the Guru was unshakeable. In utter humility, they bowed their heads low before the Guru Baba. (34)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 36

IDEAL HOUSEHOLDER AND IDEAL ASCETIC

Once a Sikh and his wife came to the Guru. They said, "O True King, we have enough property, all granted by you. But we have only one son, and when we suggest that he should marry, he says, 'If you force me to marry, I shall commit suicide with poison, and will not live.' We have, therefore, come to request you to kindly persuade him to marry. We can be happy only if he agrees to marriage. The Guru said, "Bring your son to me." They brought the son to Guru Baba. "Dear boy, your parents want you to marry. Why don't you do it?" asked the Guru.

"O True King, you have uttered these words in the Anand: 'This family that you see, will not go with you. What will not go with you, why attach yourself with that? Never do anything that you may have to regret later. Listen to the teachings of the Guru, which alone will go with you. Saith Nanak, my dear mind, always keep in your thoughts the Everlasting One.' O True Emperor, when the True Lord forbids attachment with a family, then why go in for marriage? This is the reason why I refuse to marry," said the boy.

"Blessed are you. You have said the right thing," said the Guru, and looked at the parents, "Bhai Sikhs, nobody has misled your son, nor is he under some magic spell. Neither is his thinking perverted. His is the right thinking. The Guru's shabad has inspired non-attachment in him. What the Guru has said is for such persons as he."

"O True Emperor, you are the controller of everything. Pray, give us another son," entreated the parents.

"The Guru has granted you another son. But you should leave this one alone. Stop bothering him. Let him go the way he wants."

"O True King, you have ordered us to stop. We shall never disobey your command."

"He is comitted to the True One," said the Guru, and looking towards the boy he continued, "Listen, youngman, I see the seed of Truth in your heart. So I relate two stories for your benefit. One story is about a houscholder's life. It shows what kind of a householder one should be. The second story is about the ascetic way of life. It shows what kind of an ascetic one should be. You will have to choose one or the other. Which ever path you adopt, will take you to God."

First narrating the story of a householder's path, the Guru said, "In a forest there was a nest of a sparrow and her mate, on a tree. One day during the winter season, when it was raining, an inadequately clothed man came and sat under the tree. 'O sparrow, we have a guest in our house. We should look after him,' said the he-sparrow.

"He is a human being, eating one and a half kilograms of food. What is there with us that we can offer him?' said the sparrow.

"O sparrow, whatever we have, we should offer. First of all I shall give him the warmth of a fire.' So saying, the he-sparrow flew. There was a bonfire in a nearby village. From there he picked in his beak a half-burnt dropping of a goat, and dropped it before the man. Then he threw down their nest for fuel.

"The man lit a fire. There was enough fuelwood lying under the tree. Warmth of fire made him happy. 'Sparrow, although we have nothing, we do have our bodies. I shall drop into the fire. Our guest should not go hungry,' said the he-sparrow.

"After you, I may or may not be able to maintain sanctity of marriage, therefore, I will also become his food,' said the she-sparrow as she dropped into the fire. The man ate her up.

"He is a human and a big eater,' thought the he-sparrow 'the sparrow's meat may not have satisfied his appetite. Hence, I should also become his meal. The rest is left to him. Whatever we have, we should offer to our guest.' Then the he-sparrow also dropped into the fire. The man ate the he-sparrow also. In case you choose to be a householder, this is your model. In the case of the pair of sparrows, the whole family sacrificed itself for the sake of a guest. Such a householder is liberated. He attains salvation, and is freed from the cycle of birth and death."

The second story related was that of an ascetic. The Guru said, "An ascetic lived outside Village in a hut, undemanding and devoted, believing God to be the cause of all causes, and provider of all. He had complete faith that God will send him food at meal times. He had never knocked anybody's door for food. As a rule, the Lord tests the faith of those whom He loves, to sift the real from the spurious. Once it so happened that the ascetic did not get any food for ten days. The ascetic firmly believed that God is omniscient and nothing is unknown to him. He felt, however, 'God has also given me a body. Sometimes I should put it to use. I should harness this asset. I shall go to the village with my ascetic's bowl in my hand. If someone offers, I shall take food from him, otherwise I shall return to my hut.' And with the bowl in his hand he walked through the village. A marriage was being celebrated in the house of a Khatri, where a large number of beggars had queued up. The ascetic also seated himself on one side. Everybody received food, but nobody noticed the ascetic. So he returned to his hut. God showed the ascetic a vision in which he saw two angels with burning torches in their hands. The ascetic asked, 'Who are you?' They replied that they were angels, and that God had sent them to set fire lo the house of the Khatri, because he had not given food to His devotee who has been hungry for ten days. For this reason, their instructions were lo burn his house. The ascetic realised that it was because of him that the house was being burnt. He said, Give me a torch. I shall also go with you.' As soon as they handed him a torch, he jumped upon them, saying, 'I shall burn you all, because there is no justice in your house. He, who has sent you, has no justice in His house either. If He does not dwell in their hearts, what can those poor fellows do? You have come to set fire to the house of ignorant people.' At this, the angels disappeared. God was extremely pleased with the utterance of the ascetic. For, 'he had realised that God is the source of all that is good and noble. His vision knew no discrimination. He treated his friends and foes alike. God had tested the ascetic on His touchstone, and found that he was genuine, and not fake. If he were so, he would have welcomed the burning of the Khatri's house, because they had not given him food. In that case, he surely would have been spurious. Since the ascetic was genuine, he did what behoves genuine people. After this, food started reaching the ascetic, as it used to earlier."

The Guru continued, "Listen, my child, if you want lo be an ascetic, you should be such that even in hunger and thirst, you do not curse anybody, regardless of whether they offer you food or not. An ascetic should entertain no rancour in his heart. He should consider everything to be emanating from God. His vision should be above all beings. He should always return good, not only for good, but also for evil. Such an ascetic attains salvation and is loved by God." (36)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 37

PRACTISE WHAT YOU PREACH

Once the *rababis* (rebeck players) sang a hymn before the Guru. It as a wonderful rendering. Everybody listened with rapt attention. The tune was very sweet. "O True Emperor, they have sung it very nicely," said the Sikh. But the Guru did not say anything. "O True Emperor, the *rababis* have recited the hymn very nicely," repeated the Sikh.

"The rababis have certainly done a very good rendering. But the shovel is also with them," remarked the Guru.

"O True Emperor, kindly explain the expression, 'The shovel is also with them'," requested the Sikhs.

"'The shovel is with them' is a story, which I will relate for you," said the Guru, and continued, "An official lived in a village. There was a well nearby, fitted with a Persian wheel. Somebody had borrowed his shovel, used for management of water, and had not returned it. The official arranged an announcement at the beat of the drum to get it back. But nobody returned the shovel. Then the official organised a search of every house in the village. Still the shovel was not recovered. Someone suggested that the house of the drummer should also be searched. When the drummer’s house was searched the shovel was recovered. 'Keeping the shovel in your own house, you have been beating the drum to the whole world. You are ten times more guilty than anybody else. Had the shovel been found in anybody eles house, he could plead that he did not hear the announcement. But when the shovel is recovered from the house off the drummer himself, he deserves, a much severer punishment,' said the official, and tore the drum, put it round the neck of the drummer and turned him out of the village. In the same way, the *rababis* and *pundits* preach evils of wealth to others, but themselves run after it more and more. Thus, 'The shovel is also with them'." (37)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 39

GURBANI IS INVIOlABLE

One day a Sikh was reciting the hymn of Dakhani Onkar before the Guru. When he recited this verse, "Kane ki mil kana janey, ke jane gur sura," he missed one vowel. The ardasia Sikh was instructed to catch hold of the Sikh and to give him a beating with sticks. The Sikhs asked the Guru, "O True Emperor, the Sikh was reciting the sacred 'Onkar'. Why is he being punished?"

"He is not getting the beating for reciting the 'Onkar', but for reciting it incorrectly," replied the Guru and ordered them to bring the book. The Sikhs brought the book and opened it. The Sikh who had been reciting, was made to read the verse again. He recited as he had done earlier, omitting a vowel as *"Kane ki mil kana janey, ke jane gur sura."* "How is this verse recorded in the book?" asked the Guru. In the *granth* (book) it was found to be thus, *"Karte ki mit karta jane, kai jane gur sura."* "Look, the Sikh was beaten for distortion of the verse," said the Guru, and continued, "This was a gross distortion. When he recites, *'Karte ki mit karte jane, ke jane gur sura,'* it means 'the Creator knows His extent, what does the Guru know about it?' By reciting this way he has belittled the Guru. The Guru who is to be revered like the Creator, about him he says, 'What does the Guru know?' He has created a big confusion. The correct version is, *'Karte ki mit karta jane, kai jane gur sura.'* This means that God's extent is known to God and to the Guru. No third person knows it. Thus, the Guru and God have been shown as equal, or the same (one form). Countless number of times in the Granth Sahib, have the Guru and God been represented as inseparable. He who recites the words correctly, alone gets the benefit from the recital. He who does not recite correctly, deserves to be punished. That is why he received stick blows." (39)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 40

FOLLOW ALL COMMANDS OF GURU

Once a Sikh was plastering his wall with mud. Drops of dirty water from his hands soiled the Guru's robes. The Guru said, "Someone give him a slap. He who does so will be blessed." At this, all the Sikh who were sitting there, jumped on the poor Sikh. Some gave him as many as five slaps, some eight, some ten, until the Sikh was almost unconscious.

Then the Guru said, "He who gives this Sikh the hand of his daughter, will be blessed." At this, all of them slipped away. Nobody spoke.

"O Sikhs," said the Guru, "if you obey, you should obey all instructions, and not that you obey one ahd ignore the other. It seems that the first instruction to slap was found easy, while the one to offer a daughter was found difficult to carry out. You should have thought why so many of you started beating him? Had he committed a murder? So what if a drop of dirty water fell on my clothes? And if you plead that you slapped him under instruction of the Guru, then you should have given him only one slap. Those who beat him, should have thought that if someone had given him one slap already, he should not have dealt the second one. When the Guru's instruction to give one slap had been carried out, why deal additional slaps? Why did you give him countless number of slaps? You have beaten him so much that you have pushed him close to death. All slaps above one have been dealt by you under your own perverted appreciation (of my orders)." (40)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 41

ONLY MEN OF GOD ARE REMEMBERED

One day addressing the Sikhs, the Guru asked, "Who was emperor during the times of *bhagat* Kabir?"

"O True Emperor, we do not know," replied the Sikhs.

"Look, when the emperor moved, a hundred thousand horses followed him as retinue, and today nobody knows his name. But everyone knows bhagat Kabir. Everybody knows him because he meditated on God and served saintly persons. Thus, the names of those who worship God and serve saints will be remembered in all ages. The real emperors are those who worship the Lord. Those who merely rule over countries are false emperors. Kabir has been one of the biggest bhagats. In fact, there is no difference between Kabir or Ram and God. Thus, Kabir can be called Ram Kabir," said the Guru. (41)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 42

TRUTH

Once addressing the Sikhs, the Guru asked, "Who is supporting the earth?"

"O True Emperor, be kind and explain this to us yourself," said the Sikhs.

"If somebody has heard something on this, he should come forward and reveal it," said the Guru.

"O True Emperor, some people say that the earth is supported by a bull. Others say that Seshnag is supporting the earth on its hood."

"That may be so. But who is supporting the bull or the *Seshnag?*"

"O True Emperor, be kind and explain this yourself."

"Brothers, they are supported by Truth. Truth is the sustenance of all the planets and stars and the universe. Falsehood can also pass off, when it is presented as Truth. Pure falsehood does not work. Just as solid iron alone does not float, but with a boat it can. In the same way falsehood can also work, if it is made indistinguishable from Truth," explained the Guru. (42)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 43

SHED HYPOCRISY

Once the Guru organised a Brahm Yagg. A large number of Brahmins and other guests joined. All kinds of dainties were served. The Yagg continued for many days. Rice puddings and sugar were used liberally. And *maha parshad* (meat) was also served. The Guru declared, "A Brahmin who eats *maha parshad* will be given one *mohr* (gold coin) as offering, while a Brahmin who takes rice pudding and sugar only, will receive one rupee (silver coin)." On hearing this most of the Brahmins ate meat out of greed for gold. Only a few took rice and sugar. Then the Guru said, "Those Brahmins who have eaten meat out of greed for the gold coin, are not Brahmins, but scoundrels. Give them only one rupee each as offering, and those Brahmins who have been content with rice pudding and sugar, should be given gold coins." Thus those who ate meat received a rupee each, while those who ate rice pudding with sugar, were given gold coins as alms.(43)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 44

PRAISE GOODNESS

Once the Guru's rababis started singing praises of Gopi Chand. A Sikh took them to task for praising him. The Guru overheard what the Sikh said, called him and said, "Listen, 0 Sikh, you have left behind a wife, probably not good looking. You are still attracted by her and pulled away from the Guru, who forces you into his embraces. You still try to run to such a woman. But Gopi Chand was such a brave man, who renounced eighteen thousand queens, when he came into contact with Guru Gorakh Nath. Besides all his queens were daughters of kings, most beautiful, moon-faced. They all had their foreheads adorned with precious stones. Pearls and other jewels were piled up like mountains in their palaces. They ruled over large territories. He renounced everything as if it was worthless as dry blades of grass. So, why do you stop the singers from reciting the bani of such a great person?"

"O True Emperor, I have erred. Pray, forgive me," said the Sikh.

"Listen, O Sikh, allegiance should be to Truth alone; only the blessed find this. All truthful persons are the expression of God's glory. Reciting or hearing their bani is an act of piety," said the Guru. (44)

NEXT FOLLOIS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 45

COVET NOT WHAT BELONGS TO OTHERS

Once, a Sikh owed some money to another Sikh. He did not return the debt even on repeated demands. The creditor warned, "O Sikh, if you do not return the debt here, in this world, you will have to render account in the Lord's court in the next world. Understand, this account will not be written off."

"Nobody will call for accounts, if the Lord forgives," replied the debtor Sikh, quoting a verse from the Guru's shabad. The Guru, overhearing this, reminded him of another verse, "Saith Nanak: To grab what is another's, is evil, as pig's flesh to the Muslim and cow's flesh to the Hindu. The preceptor for his follower shall intercede only when the latter has not coveted what is not his." The Guru continued, "Listen, O Sikh, the Guru will forgive only if the Sikh gives up eating the forbidden carrion. There is no other way to forgiveness. If this was not the practice, then everybody would be liberated without effort. If one can obtain liberation without effort, why should holy men preach. If preaching were unnecessary, why were the Vedas and Shastras written? Why should one try to conquer one's mind? Why should one take to renunciation? You know all these have been accepted. So, false are those who believe that they will be liberated without effort. Without following the noble path release is not possible, as proclaimed by Guru Nanak: 'Without noble deeds, talk of release is meaningless'." (45)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 46

GURU GRANTS SALVATION

Once, the Guru went out hunting in the forest. He was camping on a river bank. A Sikh came to report that a certain Sikh had been caught by a tiger. On hearing this the Guru immediately got up, armed himself with sword and dagger, and ran on foot, with instructions that nobody should follow him. The Guru encountered the tiger in the forest. When the tiger saw the Guru, it came and bent its head low before him.

"Beware, tiger, beware and fight me," commanded the Guru. The tiger started wagging his tail playfully, and again touched the ground before the Guru with his head.

"O tiger, I am not going to spare you. Get ready and fight me," commanded the Guru again. The third time the tiger touched his head on the ground before the Guru, he repeated, "Why do you prostrate before me? I am not going to spare you. Do not act in a cowardly fashion. You have yourself invited this by raking up old scores. So I will not spare you. Come on, get ready." The tiger stood before the Guru with hands cupped in prayer. The Guru struck the tiger's head with his sword, and severed it from his body. After killing the tiger, the Guru returned to his camp and said, "This tiger was very ferocious. In his previous birth, he was a Panda (Brahmin priest) and had the same ancestry. It was only the Guru who could fight him. Now he will rest in the Heavens." (46)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 47

GURU IS NOT ABOVE DISCIPLINE

Once, it so happened that the Guru reached Dadu's place. Looking towards the shrine, he saluted wilh his arrow. The Khalsa noliced this and said, "O True Emperor, you have ordered that the Khalsa shall not bow before tombs and cremation grounds, even by mistake. But you have yourself paid respect to a tomb. This has raised doubls in our minds."

"O Khalsa, I should also be punished," admitted the Guru. He complied with the punishment awarded by the Khalsa.

"O True Emperor, the Guru can commit no wrong. Why did he do that in this case?" questioned a Sikh later.

"The Guru is certainly above mistakes. We saluted the grave, because we have to teach the Khalsa how to maintain purity of faith, and how to dispense punishment," explained the Guru. The Sikh was extremely happy at this answer. (47)

ANOTHER STORY FOLLOWS STORY

Episode No. 48

HOW TO GET OVER ATTACHMENT

A Sikh once asked this question, "O True Emperor, holy men have risen above worldly attachment. By what thought are they aided? Attachment is a very chronic ailment of mankind. By what method have they risen above this? Pray, be kind and explain it to us."

"I will tell you the way the saints have conquered attachment to the world. They regard the material possessions as a dream. Just as what you see in a dream, does not exist when you wake up, in the same way saints have woken up to the real knowledge (gyan). All objects of the world appear to be transient to them," explained the Guru, and proceeded to tell a story, "There was a saint, who had attained a high spiritual stage. Living in the midst of the world, he remained above its pleasures and sorrows. Someone came and informed him that his son had died. The saint did not express any grief at the news. The people talked about the son thus, 'Sant ji, your son was very handsome and young. He was also very learned. At his death all others expressed their shock. But you have not mourned his death. What considerations have influenced your mind?'

"'During the night I saw a dream in which I was a king. I married and got a son. But when I woke up, there was neither kingdom, nor wife and son. On waking from this dream, I heard the news that my son of the world of consciousness had died. Then I went to my *Gurdev* and told him of my miserable plight. '*Swami* ji,' I said, 'not only has my dream world disappeared, but my real son also is no more. What should I do now? I am overwhelmed with grief.'

"'Give up mourning over both, for the whole universe is an illusion, the dream world and the conscious world. What is an illusion, does not deserve mourning over. Illusion means that in fact nothing was created, or exists. Uncreated objects enter our vision, in dreams or in the conscious world. Therefore, stop mourning over both,' explained my Gumdev to me, and the reality clearly dawned in my mind. For this reason, I am not affected by sorrows or pleasures of the world.' This is the way saints have risen above worldly attachments," concluded the Guru. (48)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY

Episode No. 49

BLINDNESS -TOTAL AND PARTIAL

Once the Guru explained the significance of the statement "The Hindu is blind, and the Turk kana (one-eyed). The God-enlightened are wiser than either." The Sikhs asked, "0 True Emperor, kindly explain this judgement in detail. Why is the Hindu completely blind, and the Turk (Muslim) half?" The Guru explained, "The elders of the Hindus have ruined the path of Hindus, while those of the Turks have cleared the path for them. When the Turks sit together, they think of their prophet and forefathers, and talk about their way of life, their austerities and their non-attachment with the world. Then they think of their meditation and their generosity. Then they miss and lament that while God has liberate the saints from the bonds of this world, they themselves are still entangled in it. Besides such remembrance, they do some good deeds also. For this reason, a Turk has been called one-eyed. And that is what he is. On the other hand, a Hindu has been called blind of both eyes. The reason for calling him blind is this: when the Hindus sit together and remember their prophets, they only think of the love drama of Shri Krishna with the go pis. These dramas alone form the subject of their discourses. The stories and their discussion also relate to this love drama. Their songs and hymns centre around these love stories, which are a cause for shame. After this they perform the *ras*, or enact the love drama. Beautiful girls in ornaments and costumes are made to dance. Themselves they play *mirdang* (drum) and other musical instruments. The girls dance to the music. Guru Nanak describes it thus:

> 'In the Krishna theme, the disciples play on instruments,
> Their mentors enact dances,
> By movement of the feet and moving the head.
> Flying dust falls into their hair.
> The people watching the fun, amused, go back home.
> All these mime-makers tune their instruments for bread,
> striking themselves on the earth.
> Sing those acting milkmaids and Krishna;
> Sing Sita, King Rama
> Know, God is without fear, without form, of the holy manifestation,
> I Who has created the entire universe'.

"Women as gopis move about in their company without hesitation. And they claim that by such acts they perform the worship of Parameshwar (God). In reality, they are pursuing the pleasure of their minds. But they say that they are enacting God's play. For this reason, Hindu has been described as blind, devoid of sight in both eyes. The game that Krishna played conformed to his status. But his followers overlook their own entitlement. For this reason, they commit the blunder. Those who thought over Sri Krishna's words, have found the right path. But the majority think only of his love drama. For, this alone appeals to them. They enjoy it and say that they are worshipping God. This is the reason for the appeal of Sri Krishna's love plays." (49)

NEXT FOLLOWS ANOTHER STORY (THE LAST)

Episode No. 50

GURU'S LAST DAYS

How Guru Baba merged his soul, with the Supreme Spirit, is explained here, in detail. During the time of the Fifth Master there lived one Chandu *Khatri*, Sahia by caste. He was a resident of Lahore and a diwan of the ruler. He wanted to marry his daughter to Guru Baba's son. Guru Baba rejected the proposal. Chandu took this humiliation to heart. He fed the king with false reports against the Guru, which led to torture of the Fifth Master. He continued to backbite against the Sixth Master as well, which turned the king against him also. One day the king was seated on his throne at Lahore. All his governors and ministers were in attendance. "Is there anybody who will attack Guru Har Gobind?" asked the king. Painda Khan, a Pathan, who commanded sixteen thousand horsemen, stood up, and paying obeisance to the king said, "Your Majesty, I will tie Ram Das (sic.,Guru Har Gobind) with the string of my bow, and present him to Your Majesty. This is no problem." This made the king very happy. Painda Khan mounted his attack from Lahore. He had seen the Sixth Master earlier. The Guru was extremely handsome. All the ministers, etc., would come and have a look at him on the pretext of paying obeisance. When Painda Khan mounted his attack, the Guru was sixteen years of age. The news reached the Guru. But the Guru was also a great warrior. He had no fear of confrontation and battles. When Painda Khan undertook his expedition, the Guru was at Kartarpur. So, he proceeded to Kartarpur. The Guru sent his messenger to Painda Khan with this message, "You have seen me, and I have seen you. So why should we cause trouble to others? You can come from your side, and I shall come from my side. Let us fight this religious duel, and let your men as well as mine be witness to the drama. Let us leave the outcome to God." When this message from the Guru reached Painda Khan, he was very happy. He thought to himself that he would capture the Guru like a sparrow. Painda Khan was a known fighter. His appetite was phenomenal. He was capable of eating ten kilos of raw grain. He could rub the letters off a rupee coin with his thumb. Painda Khan accepted the challenge, saying, "The proposal sent by you is ten times more acceptable to me. You should now stick to your word."

Thus, both the armies, the Pathan's as well as the Guru's, stood by. There were a large number of Brar Sikhs with the Guru. Beating of drums started from both sides. No arrows were shot or cannons fired from either side. Then from his army Painda Khan came forward. The Guru came forward from the other side. Painda Khan was covered with arm our from head to foot, and was fully armed. The Guru's horse was uncovered, and he himself wore a dress of simple cloth, turban on his head, and a shawl wrapped around, sword on his waist and a bow in his hand. Painda Khan stood with arrow mounted on his bow, and asked the Guru if he would like to use arrows or swords.

"Painda Khan, fight the way you like," said the Guru.

"Guruji, you shoot three arrows, and I shall also shoot three arrows. After this we shall fight with swords," suggested Painda Khan.

"Very well, but you may shoot your arrows first," said the Guru. At this the

Pathan started shooting arrows. The first arrow flew past the Guru's right ear, the second past his left ear. The third one took Guruji's shawl with it, leaving the turban intact on his head. When the Path an had shot his three arrows, the Guru said, "Now wait, it is my turn." The Pathan paused. The Guru went around him on his horse to see if any part of his body was not covered with iron, where an arrow could be fired. The Guru saw his naked ear. He aime,d his arrow on this point. The very first arrow struck its target and pierced through his head throwing him from his horse. The Guru came close to the Pathan who said, "Guru ji, pray save me."

"Recite your prayer now. This is no time to save your life," said the Guru and cut his head with his sword. After killing Painda Khan, the Guru returned to his army, and commanded it to attack the Pathan army. The Guru's army pounced upon the enemy. The Pathan army, however, fled like cowards, and Painda Khan's son was also killed, besides several other Path an leaders. A large number of them sustained injuries. While several drowned in the river, some managed to cross it. A large number of horses fell into the hands of the Sikhs. This operation took place at Kartarpur.

Years later, a grandson of the same Painda Khan met the Tenth Lord somewhere in the eastern territories. The Guru seated him near himself with great affection and honour. He gave him a regular daily allowance. Whenever he came, the Guru talked to him sweetly. Later, he would always remind him thus, "O Khan, if somebody has killed your father as well as grandfather, will you not avenge their deaths, being son of a Pathan? If one does not, he is not son of a Pathan, but somebody else." Every day the Guru would talk to him like this in order to incite him. In his heart the Pathan also knew that Ram Das (sic. Guru Har Gobind) had killed his father and grandfather, and that Guru Gobind Singh was his grandson, and was occupying his seat. A long time passed and the Guru continued to incite him like this. One day a Sikh came and presented a very sharp dagger to the Guru. At the same time the Path an also reached there. The Guru called him by name and affectionately seated him beside himself. The Guru drew the dagger out of its sheath, handed it over to him, and asked, "Pathan, haw many times should this dagger be struck to kill a man?"

"Guruji, if properly struck, one should suffice," relpied the Pathan. Turning to him, the Guru said, "If one who has killed your father and grandfather is there in front of you, while you have such a dagger in your hand, and you are young and son of a Pathan, and if you still do not avenge the death of your father and grandfather, then shame upon you! You cannot claim to be son of a Pathan." So saying the Guru closed his eyes, as if he was dozing. This was his opportunity. He pushed the dagger into the Guru's abdomen three times in quick succession, and tried to run away. The Guru caught hold of him, and said, "You have had your turn. You have to let me have mine." And the Guru dispatched him off. Report of this incident reached Bahadur Shah. He sent his royal surgeons and physicians for the Guru's treatment. They were able to heal the wound and give a bath to the Guru on the eighth day.

The Guru's body had recovered. But he had decided to abandon his physical frame. With full force he stretched the string of a bow, so that the wounds, which were still fresh, opened again. The surgeons could see that the Guru was himself directing the course of events. Seeing this, they went away without attempting further treatment. The Guru reached Nanded in a palanquin. The town is known as Nanded, as well as Abchal Nagar. It is in the East. Reaching there the Guru said, "We want to end our physical existence

here. This town, Nanded, is a most sacred place. Once the town was spread over fifty two kos (one kos is approximately two kms.). *Devtas* lived here. Sidhas and saints had their dwellings here. We want to quit our body here." A huge *yajna* was arranged at this place, in which all kinds of foods were served to the hearts' content of everybody. The Guru arranged purchase of fuel wood for his cremation. The Sikhs collected a lot of sandalwood. They collected incensce, saffron and scents. Many Sikhs could not help crying aloud. One *pahar* before leaving his body, the Guru recited the following quartet:

> 'Ever since I grasped Your feet,
> Everything else has lost its appeal.
> Rama, Rahim, Puranas, Quran - All say different things;
> I accept none of them.
> Smritis, Shastras, Vedas, all deal with mysteries,
> I pay no heed to them either.
> O the Wielder of the Sword (All-powerful One),
> This is all Your Grace; You, not I, have said everything.'

Then the entire Khalsa gathered and prayed, "O True Emperor, give the Khalsa a leader."

"I have placed the Khalsa under the protection of the Timeless Lord (Akal Purkh)," said the Guru. He changed his dress, wore a new set of arms and ordered, "No additional clothes are to be put on my body. Let it remain in the same clothes and arms." In his own presence the pyre was laid. When it was done, he climbed up the pyre and squatted on it in posture of meditation. Thus, he merged his soul with the Supreme Soul. Then the Khalsa laid sandalwood and incense, besides rose perfume and saffron on the funeral pyre. Everybody showered flowers that piled into heaps. Liberal quantity of ghee (butter oil) was poured over it. As soon as the fire was lighted, everybody started crying, and a din rose which lasted for a long time. Several Sikhs attempted to jump into the pyre, but the attendants stoutly resisted, and did not let anybody do so. When the pyre turned into ashes, there was no trace of the body or the arms. Everybody believed that Guru Baba had taken his body along. There was a prolonged ovation. Countless kirtan sessions were organised. A memorial was raised at the spot, around which a number of dharamshalas were later constructed. Everywhere, the holy Granth was recited and the rababis sang hymns. There the Khalsa settled in large numbers. This has become a place for praise and meditation of the Lord. The place reminds one of the Guru. Whoever goes there, attains happiness. The world worships it with offerings. All kinds of prayers are granted by the Guru. All kinds of foods are served, and all Sikhs and saints enjoy it. This place fulfils the aspirations of all beings in every way.

Funeha: Sewa Das *Udasi* has authored this series of anecdotes –

'This book of the Guru's praise and discussion
of the saffron of his love.
The Guru's praise is endless and beyond
measure and beyond reach.
For my own good have I made this humble attempt.
Here ends the *sakhi* of Guru Gobind Singh.
With this one sakhi the number of stories has reached fifty'.

Dohira : 'Study and listen and grasp in your mind
the secrets of the saints.
You will attain salvation and freedom from
suffering in this world.'